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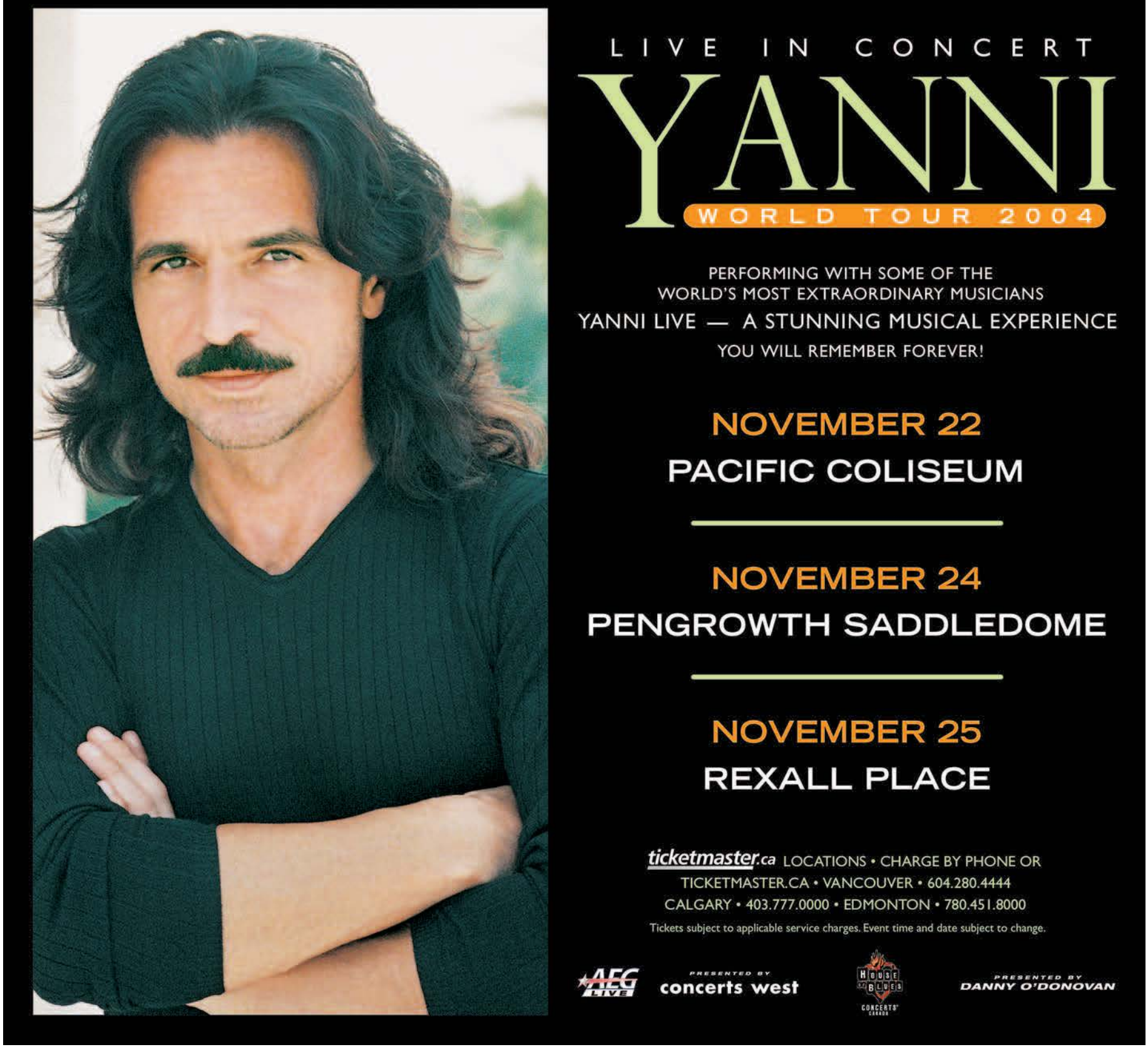

Missiles

ACT NOW TO BLOCK NEW STAR WARS by Common Ground staff

If Canada signs a missile defence agreement with the US, it will severely constrain our sovereignty and independence. How can we help to defend the US against retaliation yet refuse to participate in their military adventures? After all, as Bush is fond of saying, "You're either with us or you're against us." Do we really believe that we can be both?

Mel Hurtig, in his new book, Rushing to Armageddon contends that this is the most critical foreign policy decision that Canada has ever faced.

We are at a critical stage regarding Canadian involvement in US anti-ballistic missile defence. All indications are that the government is going to sign an agreement for the militarization of space. Canada already agreed this year to let the US use all our radar installations.

Although our pro-Star Wars prime minister has committed to a parliamentary vote, a majority from a divided Liberal Party can easily get the support they need from the Conservatives and claim a "democratic" victory.

Our only hope is to demonstrate massive public opposition before that happens. We know from the Ipsos-Reid poll that was commissioned last April that 69 percent of Canadians are opposed. Unfortunately, most of them have not been sufficiently motivated to express their views.

The website www.ceasefire.ca has a number of letters opposing missile defence that you can modify or just send as is to Paul Martin and members of Parliament. Take a few moments to send a letter, if you have not already done so.

In case you haven't been following the debate, a US missile defence system will create a new global arms race whether or not it will work, as countries prepare to defend themselves. Several important missile defence treaties have already been broken by the USA and arms analysts say that the US plans to build a missile defence system so that it has the option of a first strike with nuclear weapons. What is often overlooked is that it is very simple to deliver a nuclear warhead in a suitcase anywhere in the world and missiles and even nuclear subs are useless as defensive weapons.

See www.ceasefire.ca for more info.

Long ago, far away

The Vancouver International Storytelling Festival this year features the Middle Eastern community. For three days, colourful folktales from this culture will unfold among Persian carpets, hypnotic music and aromatic teas. Stories in English, Persian and Arabic will be told by immigrants, and by both emerging and seasoned storytellers.

The Vancouver Society of Storytelling is creating a stronger community around the ancient and innovative artform of storytelling. This year's festival explores the vibrant cultures that make up Vancouver today and the stories that have been brought here by newcomers from many lands. Stories for young and old will fill the Vancouver Museum, November 19-21, with additional events elsewhere on Saturday and Sunday evenings.

Umeeda Switlo, this year's new festival director, attended the National Storytelling Conference to study the artform. In doing so she realized that she too had a story to tell.

by Umeeda Switlo

Long ago, far away but it could have been just yesterday, a CIA agent saved my life. You wonder how that could be? Well here is my story.

I was watching television in Uganda with my family. It was the news and we always came together to listen and watch. We had been through a revolution, independence and so there we were always cautious, always on alert.

This time on TV someone pushed the news anchor aside and sat in his place. I was young so I may not remember the exact words but this is what I heard "This is Idi Amin Dada… because of recent discoveries you Indians have 90 days to leave this country."

We had seen him give back our businesses after Milton Obote took majority shares away. We liked him then. I was giggling when I saw this but my parents were on the phone already chatting loudly - something was really wrong. My mom was going to Canada that day. She wanted to live there, a place of stability, a place where her kids could get a good education. Now she would have to wait.

It was chaos. Ninety days to leave. What would happen to our homes, cars, bank accounts, properties and businesses? We soon found out day by day with new Idi Amin announcements. The government was freezing bank accounts and stopping the purchase of anything but one way tickets out of Uganda.

The most humiliating of all was counting us at gunpoint like cattle, grabbing our passports, separating family members. I was terrified.

My family had befriended an American. I babysat his children who went to my mother's nursery school. He was concerned about the army raping Indian girls and knew that there were three girls in the family. He said he would help us.

He asked for our passports and told us that my sister and I would be in the US soon. What? The US ? Why and how could a history professor do that?

He came back in a few days with an acceptance letter from the University of West Virginia, a US student visa for my sister Muneera and an acceptance letter and student visa for Medford High School for me.

This was unheard off. How did he work this miracle? We were refugees. Why did the US agree to a student visa when we didn't have a home to return to. Those of you who have been refugees know what I mean.

If he bribed someone we might have a bad price to pay. We asked and he candidly said, "I have connections. Don't worry."

We had only days to leave, first my sister. We never thought we would be seeing the US.

When it was my turn, I had to fit everything into one suitcase. I was 13 and had never been away from home before.

We had moved to an apartment because our home was opposite a new concentration camp. The dead or dying prisoners were often tied to the fence and mutilated. There was always gunfire and my family moved to a safer place. This last night in Kampala I looked out the window after hearing gunfire and saw a man in the apartment opposite get hit and fall forwards down to the street. I didn't wake anyone up. I stared and then hid. I was packed and I was leaving.

The next day we went to the airport and my parents handed me bangles, a necklace, earrings and rings. This was amazing jewelry, 24 carat gold. I had never been allowed to wear this stuff and here my mother was, always the realist. "This is for you, take it and keep it safe for when we meet again."

At this point the army guys were everywhere and I had to go into the secure area

continued on page 11

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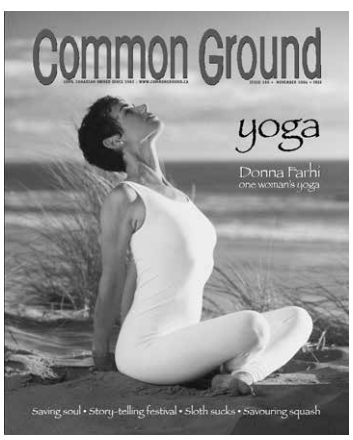

OUR COVER

Pat Dolan photograph, dawn at New Brighton beach South Island, New Zealand. Donna Farhi has practised yoga for 28 years and taught since 1982. She writes for Yoga Journal and Yoga International, and authored The Breathing Book (Henry Holt & Company), Yoga Mind, Body & Spirit: A Return to Wholeness, and Bringing Yoga to Life: The Everyday Practice of Enlightened Living. Donna lives in Christchurch, NZ www.donnafarhi.co.nz

IN THIS ISSUE

CULTURE

Long ago, far away - storytelling – Umeeda Switlo 4
The Take - Argentina rising film review – Geoff Olson 10
Sloth in monks and meatpuppets – Geoff Olson 12
Readers answer the big question – letters 13
A War Against Truth – book review – Jim Holt 16
Vera Drake - heroine or monster? – Robert Alstead 32

HEALTH & FITNESS

Donna Farhi yoga interview – Joseph Roberts 6
My life morning to night – Kareen Zebroff 8
Savouring winter squash – Vesanto Melina 29

ZODIAC 30

SPIRITUALITY

Yoga a mystic science – Sant Rajinder Singh 11
What is real? – Gwen Randall-Young 14
Self suffering – Eckhart Tolle 15
Sahaja yoga born with you – Shri Mataji 15
Yogi Bhajan's spiritual legacy (1929 – 2004) 18

ENVIRONMENT

Getting heard is hard – David Suzuki 16
Sun, wind and electric vehicles – Guy Dauncey 17

RESOURCE DIRECTORY 20
CLASSIFIEDS 30
DATEBOOK 31

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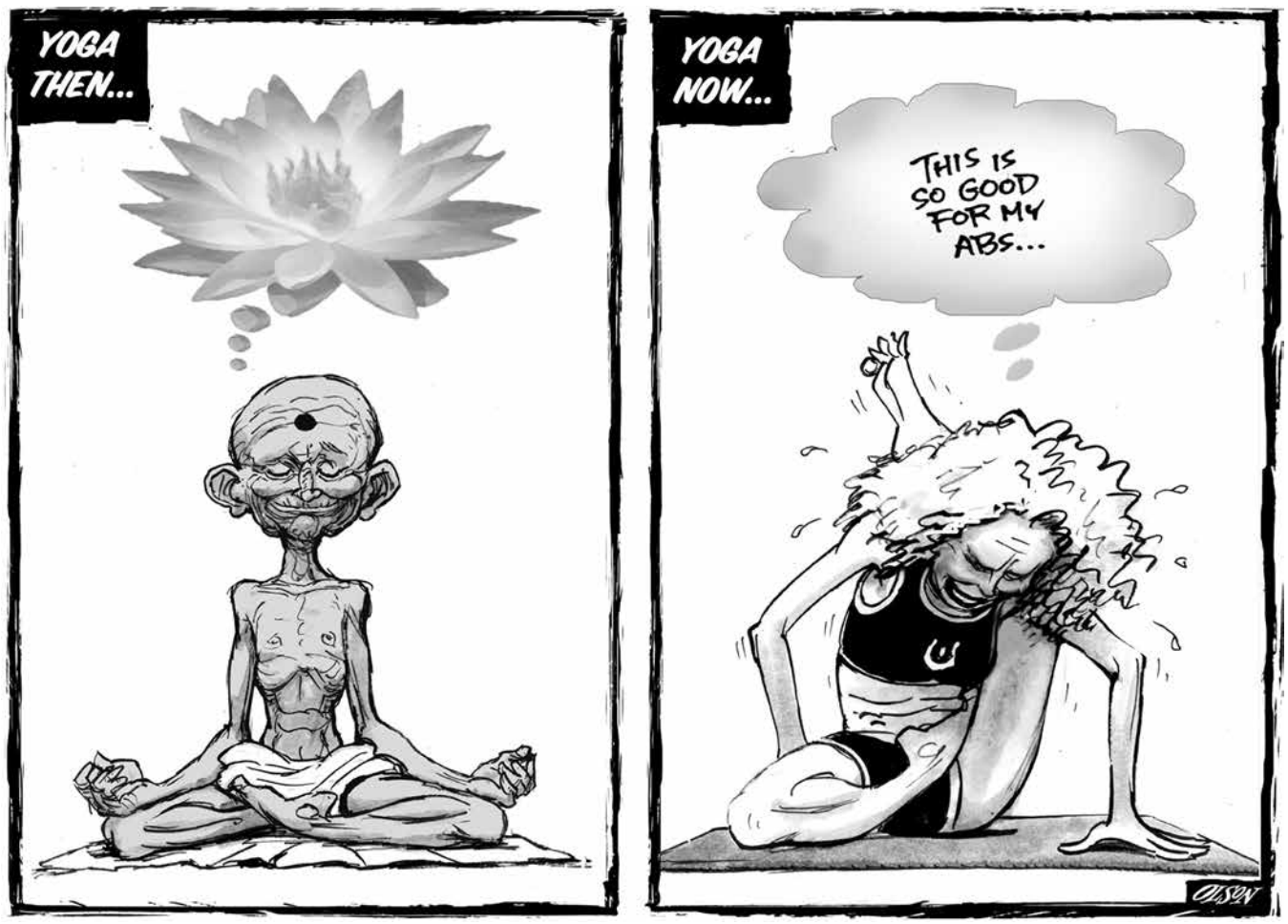

One woman's yoga

DONNA FARHI INTERVIEW

by Joseph Roberts and photos by Murray Irwin

Joseph Roberts: How did you come to yoga?

Donna Farhi: I was 16 and going to high school. My family had been in crisis since we moved to New Zealand from the States when I was 10. By the time I was 16 the family was pretty much disintegrating.

JR: Why did your father move you?

DF: I don't really know. I think he had the idea that New Zealand was going to be a safe and good place to raise children. I think what was going on with the Vietnam war scared him a little bit. I don't really know his reasons. He's always had wanderlust, always moved all his life and of course we moved with him because children go where their parents go. But I don't think he realized how dramatic a move it would be. It was essentially a foreign country. They might as well have been speaking a foreign language. It was like going back in time 20 years.

At that time New Zealanders had a fairly strong anti-foreign or anti anything different sentiment. So, there I was, this 10-year-old very precocious little girl from the US with a voracious appetite for learning. I found myself in a school system that was essentially a follow-through from British colonialism. It was like something out of Oliver Twist really.

I didn't fit in, and my spirit, which was always very connected to movement and dancing and to all things poetic and lyrical, felt compressed from the moment I arrived. In everyday terms I felt frightened at school. I was ostracized, teased and by the time I was 16 I was pretty desperate. I'd say I was clinically depressed, though in those days we didn't have those labels.

A physical education teacher offered a yoga class and it was elective. Only the really weird kids went. About six of us showed up while the rest of them went off ice-skating or whatever else there was offered for elective time. I was just mesmerized by the effect the class had on me. I felt safe and calm and it was the first time I'd felt like I belonged to anything. Within a week or so I'd gone out and collected some yoga books, and within a few weeks the teacher stopped teaching because she was heavily pregnant, so I asked permission to go into a tiny little concrete room off the main auditorium of the school and use my elective time to practise yoga.

The principal thought this was some guise for truancy and a few weeks later I was pulled into the office and he sat there like the cat that had caught the mouse and just couldn't believe a young girl was practising yoga by herself in a little concrete room with no windows. The teachers would come in and have a look occasionally and there I'd be doing whatever, sitting meditation or breathing practices or asana practices. I just knew this was going to be something I would do all my life.

I think the incredible imprint of that early experience was that even without knowing the philosophical backdrop upon which yoga sits, just through the simple practise of slowing my breath, sitting in simple movements and focusing my mind I could conjure up this place of peacefulness inside me. I practised religiously, I think because I had to. I felt that every other aspect of my life was so out of my control, but this was something I did have control over. I took to it like a duck to water.

JR: What happened next?

DF: Fairly soon after I started practising yoga I became involved in theatre and realized quickly that the movement part was the axis which I wanted to explore. So I jumped in the deep end and started studying dance full time. That in itself was a journey. I think I wanted to study dance because I felt very connected to God when I danced. I felt that was the way I could express that connection, through my body, and it had always been that way when I was a child.

I studied and got very technically proficient. I reached a point one day where I realized I was just a machine that could do clever things, could do double pirou-

Virabhadrasana II (Warrior Pose II)

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ettes and balance on one leg, but I lost the thread of why I was dancing. It didn't make sense to me any more and I think it was confusing for the people looking on from the outside because it appeared I was ready to enter a company. But, it was like the world just stopped and I realized that I had lost whatever it was I was connected to through dancing.

I wanted to find it again and had the intuition I would find it through submitting to my yoga practice in a deeper way. So I began to study yoga in San Francisco. I was always given the advice to find the best teachers. So, I travelled to India. I found a teacher in San Francisco who had a two-year waiting list and I kept calling until she let me in a few weeks later. I travelled to Greece and England and coming through for me.

So, I thought, "Here I am. I've come to the end of the road once again. I have to find the heart of this, the spirit." I began a deep, deep inquiry. It felt like jumping off a cliff. I can recall at that time wanting somebody to tell me what to do, what structure. I remember a particular interview I went to at Antioch University in San Francisco. I thought perhaps if I went to university I'd find some sort of structure that I could slot myself into conveniently and I would arrive at the answers. This fellow was very perceptive.

I came in and told him I'd been teaching yoga for a number of years and writing for journals and an asana column for Yoga Journal by them. I asked if he could tell me about his program and he looked

Marichyasana II (Sage Marichi Pose)

studied with teachers who I thought were exceptional.

Then I did exactly the same thing with the yoga as I did with the dance. I think we have to make the same mistake many times before we get it. I chose Iyengar yoga, a type of yoga that is very form oriented, very challenging physically. I became adept and completely identified with the body. I knew after a few years of practising in this way that there was a certain dishonesty going on within me and I could not in all honesty teach in the way I'd been taught. There was something else

me square in the eye and said, "All the hairs on my back are on end since you've walked into the room. What you're doing already is what our graduates hope to do when they leave here, so there's absolutely nothing here for you." At that point I felt absolutely crushed.

Then he went on and said that when Schoenberg was struggling to come up with a structure for how he was going to compose his best work was before he got it. He said to me, "I sense that you're on to something and if you slot yourself into a structure or another myth you're not going to fulfill that journey for yourself." I went out into Chinatown and just cried my way from one end of the city to another because I felt like I'd been cast out into utter darkness.

For many years teaching and practising was stabbing in the dark. I was trying to find a way back to a natural and loving way of being with the practice and that's what I'm sharing now, especially with people who want to train as teacher. It's to teach from the heart, from the essential message, of the tradition, as that is so desperately what people need to hear when they go to a yoga class.

JR: What is that essential heart?

DF: I think first and foremost it is to meet every person who comes into the room with an unconditional accepting presence, and to see them as already whole; to recognize that each of us has some degree of fragmentation. We come in with our problems and our neuroses and our physical conditions and our history. So, to see through that and to be seeing each person as whole - and everyone's desperately wanting to be seen in this way - is healing, to hold the vision of wholeness in the faith in my own wholeness and the wholeness of the student.

The other message which is perhaps counter to how some would interpret this tradition is that I think we all have an inner teacher and if we're listening and quiet we'll be given those answers, whether those answers are how to move or what to say in this moment, what to do or not to do in this moment. We all have that wisdom. I feel my job as a teacher is not so much to share my wisdom but to create a context in which the other person can discover their unlimited access to their own wisdom-nature.

It is like setting up a dinner table for guests. You set flowers on the table, prepare the cutlery just so, prepare the meal and then because there's this expectation that something special is going to happen, something special does happen. I have that expectation in every class, and I think that sets up a field for people to awaken to the wonderfulness of this moment when we just stop long enough to pay attention.

I have a high expectation of teachers.

JR: To set up the context. Could you talk a bit about the difference between teaching teachers rather than students?

DF: Teaching teachers challenges me probably more than any other kind of teaching I do in that I have to break down

Upavistha Konasana (Wide-Spread Angle Pose)

what may be intuitive or unconscious for me as a teacher. It may be information that I arrived at intuitively or unconsciously and now I have to make that process conscious within myself, stratify and codify it. Deconstruct the steps to this process and help the teachers I'm training become cognizant of those steps. It's important that they're cognizant because they have to know where in this series of steps is the student. Where do I meet this person right now, how can I most effectively work with the person who is before me?

I think what is also very challenging about the model that I'm working from is that it's not formulaic. It's not paint by numbers. It's a model that demands a deductive awareness on the part of the teacher to listen and respond to the students. The other part of the model which I think is terribly missing in most teaching that goes on in our culture is that every technique a teacher uses needs to be assessed in terms of whether it's moving a

continued on page 8

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My life morning to night

KAREEN'S YOGA

by Kareen Zebroff

It is a truth universally acknowledged that one knows more at age 63 than at 40, 50 or even 60.

I was not surprised, therefore, when a pregnant young mother of three, having recognized me by my voice at a health fair as that "yoga-lady" her mom used to watch on television, eagerly asked me for hints from my own life and daily routine.

Being a somewhat didactic Scorpio (who's working on that), and loving to mentor, I delighted in burbling forth some of my secrets right away, with the proviso that I can of course be just as weak willed as anyone else. To her credit, the young mother soaked up every bon mot but soon despaired of remembering it all and adjured me to write it down. Herewith, then, my daily round.

Sleep. I've always liked my sleep, but do enjoy getting up earlier these aging days, especially since sleep experts now say that a bit less sleep is better than too much. Seven-and-a-half hours, plus whatever time it takes you habitually to fall asleep, seems ideal. Apparently, we awaken up to 28 times a night, but don't remember it if the interval is less than three minutes. The secret is not to fret and you will still get 70 percent of the resting qualities of sleep. The homeopathic Rescue Remedy drops, and the acupuncture-derived tapping techniques of EPI (energy psychology interactive) or EFT (emotional freedom technique), mentioned in an earlier column, are also effective.

Breakfast. It appears that human beings are more ritualistic about their breakfasts than about any other meal. But, it is a great mistake not to have any breakfast at all, for your blood sugar will be at its lowest point. Because of all the energy demands made upon you from early morning on, it is important to "break your fast" as soon as possible with good food that includes protein; and, because the heart needs the fluids to thin down sluggish circulation caused by thick blood.

Breakfasts in our home include an organic egg and a riot of deeply coloured stir-fried vegetables (or quinoa in winter) for me, and whole-grain breads with cheese and homemade freezer jam for my husband. Both of us have a cup or two of organic coffee, but during the day we drink either green tea or a coffee-substitute made of roasted barley, rye, chicory and beet roots. As a break, I love to have this last with organic milk and stevia - a sweet, herbal extract that has no calories.

Early morning exercise. We gently do only a few standing yoga stretches before boogieing along the seawall for about 4 kms, rain or shine for 27 years now, while part-time humming the holy meditative a-u-m sound. But, because the body gets accustomed to routine, it also needs to be shocked into working harder by spurting during our walk; by playing early-morning singles tennis, walking up seven flights of stairs several times a day, and taking longish bike rides; or, in the summer, by swimming in the ocean for half an hour, or in a 137 m. long outdoor pool for six to eight lengths. An old Jane Fonda low-impact aerobics tape is next for 30 minutes every second day, alternated with the two to five most important activities on the exercise machine. A hottish shower follows, and only after that do we feel warmed-up enough to practise, for up to 20 minutes, the rest of the various yoga poses each of our older bodies would most like to avoid such as the posture clasp.

Mid-morning health drink. Joie de vivre is an expression of health, and our energy went up hugely within three months of starting a delicious drink of my own devising, because we simply hadn't been taking all of our vitamins regularly enough in pill form.

To a base of blueberries (or any fruit) is added one scoop of a good whey protein (two if the drink is also a lunch substitute); one heaped teaspoon of spirulina or green stuff; 2 tablespoons of a good oil blend containing Omega 3, 6 and 9 (which I also put on my face); lecithin; a scoop of powdered vitamins and minerals; 2 teaspoons liquid calcium with magnesium and vitamin D; vitamin E from a capsule; 2 drops of oregano oil; powdered digestive enzymes (with bromelain for muscular aches, pains or sprains); ground apricot kernels or papaya pips; and juice or 1 percent milk.

Lunch. Since I work from home, I love making my own quick vegetable soup from fried-in-olive-oil onions and garlic, cabbage-types, beets and greens, carrots, peppers, fresh ginger, turmeric, hot peppers, Dr. Bragg's enzyme-flavouring, lots of vegetable-broth made from bouillon-cubes, and either barley, lentils, black beans, brown rice or unpeeled potatoes.

Nearly all the food we eat is organic nowadays. My father, siblings, children and I all seem to have become more and more sensitive, over the years - with distressing symptoms of indigestion - to anything that has been chemically sprayed. (to be continued)

Kareen Zebroff's classic ABC of Yoga book and video, as well as her Yoga Over 40/50/60 video can be ordered through her website. www.kareenzebroff.com

continued from page 7

student towards independence and freedom or whether it's moving them in the direction of dependence.

That totally alters every word that comes out of your mouth, because you're guiding a process of inquiry rather than telling the person what it is they should feel or how they should feel it. It's a very different model for teaching, but I've worked from different ones and it does bring the student in direct contact with that force which is animating them. That's the main thing I think that's missing at the moment in the popularization of yoga.

The public is being misled in a sense that yoga equals asana, all these wondrous and crazy looking postures. In its essence, yoga has nothing to do with the posture or gymnastic physical feats. It has to do with using the body to connect to that animating force. So, if I'm practising asana it's to connect myself to that which animates me: to the universe, to life and to nature. If I'm doing meditation or a breathing practice or karma yoga the goal is not to get your foot on the back of your head.

In the last decade yoga has very much gone in the direction of objectification and a complete 180 degrees from the original purpose of the tradition, which is to recognize its paradoxical nature. It's got a strong somatic base and the purpose of that is to use the body to directly experience that we are more than our body.

JR: Could you describe a direct somatic experience?

DF: Well, somatic is any practice that's embodied, anything that brings you into the sensation of the physical body.

JR: So it's a presence that comes with that?

DF: Not necessarily. It is what makes yoga such an extraordinary tradition in that it has this strong basis of embodied spirituality. But there's a paradox and this is where I think those of us in the West have tripped up.

We have this strong embodied portion to the practice but the purpose of those embodiment practices is to directly experience, not as something intellectual or that "I think," but directly in-body knowing that while my body is a lovely thing to have, I am more than that. The direction yoga has gone in the last decade in the West is to use the practices to build up the body as our exclusive identity. So, now we have yoga for abs and for keeping you forever young and yoga that's going to make the body more beautiful and perfect.

Now, it can generally make the body more beautiful and healthy, but that's not the ultimate purpose of the practise. We call this losing the plot. What is the real storyline here and where did we lose the plot?

continued on page 9

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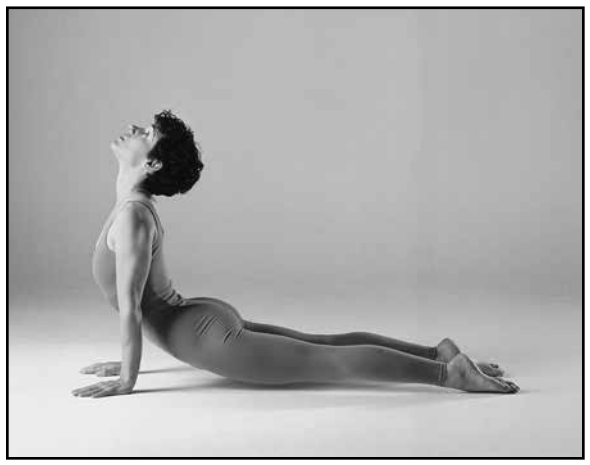
continued from page 8

On the upside I would say there is a groundswell internationally now. Everywhere I travel to teach there's a groundswell of people who have done these physical practices to the nth degree. They've done their 30-minute headstand. They've practised and practised the physical poses, have taken it to the limit and are now asking the question "Is this all there is?" in the same way that someone who collects houses, cars, beautiful women and money in the bank might pause and ask that question.

People who've been doing these practices are now asking that question and I see my role as a bridge for people who've been working with a very physical practise of asana and are now looking to use it within the context of the whole tradition, rather than as a practise unto itself. It was never meant to be done just by itself. It was meant to be done in relationship to the whole tradition.



Urdhva Mukha Svanasana (Upward Facing Dog Pose)

JR: What's closest to your own heart now?

DF: In the last year I've noticed a profound shift in my spiritual life - my whole life - it's all the same to me. I feel an immense comfort in just being and a faith in life that wasn't there so much before. I always saw the universe as an essentially hostile place and I don't any more, I don't experience it that way any more.

Urdhva Mukha Svanasana (Upward Facing Dog Pose)

I feel it very strongly in working with people now because when I walk into the room there may be a little anxiety before I show up to teach 50 teachers, but after a few minutes I just feel so at ease. I feel such a trust in just being, that I don't have to know the answers. I can be, as I tell my trainees, in an intelligent unknowing state, and to be teaching from and to be with everyone from that place. There's a great joy in that and it sets up a joyousness in the room, too. So, I'm taking immense satisfaction from teaching and practising and being at the moment.

The other thing is that I have a huge passion for horses and studying natural horsemanship. I'm taking my yoga into my relationship with my horses at home. I think that's going to be my next big yoga, the study of horsemanship.

JR: I have a daughter who'd love to help you with that.

DF: I have two horses at home. I have an Arabian warmblood waiting there for me that has only been ridden a few times, so I have a very exciting project to go home to.

JR: I don't know much about horses, but I remember the first time one started galloping I had no control.

DF: They're strong teachers. There are many metaphors between the practice of yoga and the practice of being in partnership with horses. It takes a great deal of training, skill and patience not to control the horse, but all of that work is to be able to ride and allow the spirit of the horse to come through without fear.

I've learned more from my horses in the last seven years than I have from any formal yoga teachers, because they put me right up against whatever is stuck in me. If I'm working through a problem with my horse it's because there's something stuck in me and the horse has found it and we're not going to progress until I figure out what that is in me that needs to be resolved, be that unresolved violence or impatience or a lack of acceptance, whatever the issue is.

They're masters at it, and they're thousand pound masters. You need to pay attention.

JR: I guess this could be said about all relationships.

DF: The big one with horses is you have to overcome your fear of death, because they're so immensely powerful that if you're going to be in partnership with that immense power and not contain, distort or constrict it, you have to have a kind of fearlessness. And you can't pretend, they know.

Donna Farhi has been practising yoga for 28 years and teaching since 1982. She leads intensives and teacher training programs internationally. Donna has been the asana columnist for both Yoga Journal and Yoga International Magazine, and is the author of the contemporary classics, The Breathing Book, and Yoga Mind, Body & Spirit: A Return to Wholeness. Her third book Bringing Yoga to Life: The Everyday Practice of Enlightened Living (Harper SanFrancisco) is an exploration of yoga as a life-long apprenticeship. Born in the US, Donna now resides in Christchurch, New Zealand. To access Donna's teaching schedule please visit her website at: www.donnafarhi.co.nz.

Donna's next visit to Vancouver will be next year. The five-day retreat runs from September 30 to October 5, 2005. Call Leila Stuart for details 604-536-7894 or contact leila-yoga@shaw.ca

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The Take - a story of hope

film review by Geoff Olson

In Joseph Heller's World War II novel Catch-22, a business-minded mess cook, Milo Minderbinder, flies to Malta to purchase fresh eggs. Milo's eggs cost him 7 cents each, but he charges the squadrons 5 cents each, inexplicably making a profit in the process. He constructs a "syndicate" throughout the Mediterranean, through which he buys and sells goods, mostly foodstuffs. Somehow, the mess cook holds high positions in government: mayor of Palermo, assistant governor general of Malta, vice-shah of Oran, caliph of Baghdad, imam of Damascus, and sheik of Araby.

Argentinian workers celebrate their occupation

The fiscal absurdities of Heller's novel foreshadowed the postwar paradoxes of global finance. The Take, a stirring documentary by husband and wife team Avi Lewis and Naomi Klein, addresses one of the more ruinous chapters in this absurd history and what happens when people fight back. But the NFB/CBC co-production is not a downer; it's a bittersweet story of hope that is still without a fairy-tale finish. As this is being written, the Latin American protagonists in the film are still struggling on.

Several years ago, the Argentine economy began a downward spiral from which it has yet to recover. The Forja autoplant, the Zanon ceramics factory and the Brukken garment factory are three companies profiled in the film. All were abandoned, like hundreds of others, by their owners. All three became success stories of sorts as the workers reclaimed them and went back to work without management or unions. The Movement of Recovered Companies, as it's called, spread across Argentina with the motto "Occupy, Resist, Produce." The Take puts a human face on the struggle, moving from the lunchroom to the dining room, and profiling the principles and the lesser players. The reluctant, beating heart of resistance in the film is a fellow identified as Freddy from the Forja autoplant, who discovers toward the end of the film that he isn't just reclaiming his job; he's part of a historical movement.

Director Avi Lewis in Argentina

The Movement of Recovered Companies isn't the same as workers "seizing the means of production." It's bottom-up, rather than top-down, with each factory working out its own idiosyncratic problems. (Some go with equal pay for all workers, some don't.) Not surprisingly, the factory owners are opposed to the workers "expropriating" their ghostlike properties and running them as cooperatives. The former workers, for their part, refuse to stand by and see their former workplaces being stripped down for scrap. Armed only with slingshots against the police, the workers stand guard at the plants. Freddy and his colleagues go to court to try to win recognition for their movement, which puts pesos back in the pockets of people otherwise condemned to the street.

Workers talk about their lives

We get to see the oily Carlos Menem, the former president who first presided over Argentina's economic freefall, attempting another stab at re-election (the man with the orange tan compares himself to Jesus Christ in one speech). We witness an unsuccessful attempt to get some shadowy figures from the International Monetary Fund to talk on camera. The bank's reps are made out to be the villains in the piece by implication, but it's never quite clear how things became so bad for the factory workers and other Argentines. A lack of historical background leaves the film feeling a little short on context.

Here's some context for The Take. Writing in the New York Times in 2001, MIT economist Paul Krugman stated that "everyone around the world" regarded the Argentine and debt crisis as having "Washington's fingerprints all over it." The Argentine peso was tied to the US dollar back in the early nineties, supposedly as a means to reign in rampant inflation. For a while it worked. Yet at the high point of fiscal implosion, according to York university professor of political science Leo Panitch, the size of Argentina's debt was 45 to 50 percent relative to GNP, with rates of interest 40 times what a US treasury bill earns.

Over the space of a few ruinous years at the turn of the millennium, Argentina went through leaders like some people go through Bic pens, seeking one capable of writing legislation without ringing up the IMF for ink refills.

Following the lending agencies' prescriptions - in particular the IMF's innocuous-sounding "technical memorandum of understanding" in 2000 - Argentina increased taxes on businesses, cut its budget, sliced civil service salaries and reduced pensions - all during a recession. Says Panitch: "Every dollar lent went out in interest payments; every cent went to Wall Street and offshore banks."

In a completely unsustainable situation with rioting in the streets, and bled dry by billions of dollars flying out of the country to service the debt, the nation defaulted on its payments. Argentina's economy minister, Jorge Remes Lenicov, then announced the devaluation of the peso, ending a decade-long policy which saw the country's currency being on the same one-to-one level with the US dollar. To staunch the flow of capital, the government instituted a bank deposit freeze in December of 2001. Unable to recover their money from dead bank machines, millions of Argentineans went postal.

continued on page 14

Yoga a mystic science

by Sant Rajinder Singh

How many of us have asked the question, "What is God?" How many have wondered what is the soul? Has the question of what happens to us after death ever crossed our minds? If we have ever asked ourselves any of these questions, then we can be categorized as mystics.

Mysticism is the study of the soul and God, and how we can reunite the two. A mystic is one who searches for answers about the nature of God, the soul, and the mystery of life and death. It is only the degree to which one actively searches for these answers that distinguishes a mystic from a realized mystic and saint.

Few people pass through life without ever pondering these questions. Some feel the answer is out of their attainment however and give up seeking answers, whereas others settle for those answers provided by the scriptures or from proponents of the religion to which they were born. There are others who are not satisfied with reading or hearing the answers given by others. This category of people wants to experience the answers for themselves. Traditionally, we have called these people the "mystics."

Those who attained the enlightenment they sought have reminded us that we should not be content with reading their results. We, too, need to experience realization for ourselves.

The founders of each religion were mystics, for they engaged in the search for answers to questions regarding the soul and God. Before their teachings were formalized into organized religious structures, they passed on their discoveries to those who also wanted answers. The essence of the teachings of all saints and religious founders was to impart the method for experiencing spirituality for one's self. This is the heart of every religion.

Thus, all those who are members of various religions are mystics as well. Unfortunately, many people are members of their religion in name only. How many actually practise the basic tenets of their religions - which is to know one's Self and to know God? If we did, then we, too, would engage in those practices given out by the religious founders.

If we go deep into our scriptures we will find references to mystical experiences, revelations and methods to attain those states. All those who attained realization of the soul and God tell us that it was achieved through a process of meditation, prayer, contemplation, inner practices, or inversion. Every saint and mystic taught the method of meditation or prayer as a science, and they taught it to people of all religions and faiths.

> Mysticism is the study of the soul and God, and how we can reunite the two.

Meditation is not hard. It is taking our attention from one place and putting it in another. If you ever looked through a telescope or microscope, you know it is a matter of taking one's attention from looking at the room as is, and focusing through a lens. Similarly, our attention is generally focused on the outer world. If we focus our attention at a special point within us, we can see worlds of wonder awaiting us within.

That special point at which we can see into the realms beyond is the third or single eye, located between and behind the two eyebrows. It is known as the divya chakshu, ajna chakshu, tenth door, or daswan dwar. By concentrating our attention there, an inner vista of Light and Sound will open for us. Our soul will concentrate itself at that point and as it is absorbed in the Light it will transcend physical body consciousness. It will then enter regions of higher consciousness. Through this simple process we can experience for ourselves what is beyond this world.

Spirituality is not only developed in one place like a monastery or on the banks of a river or in the wilderness. If we want spirituality, it can be developed in any place. We can recognize our spirituality in whatever culture, region or religion we are born and in whatever activities we are involved.

Although in some forms of mysticism people try to negate life and everything else just to concentrate on their spiritual journey, we need to become complete human beings. We need to develop physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Actually, on the health of the spirit depends the health of the body, mind and intellect.

In the East it is said that when the peacock dances in the forest and nobody sees it, what good is it? Just like a flower that blooms and gives fragrance to others, so should we. Hence, we should remain in our outer societies and not negate that part of our life.

Once we recognize that we are soul, we need to spend time in enhancing our spiritual capabilities. To do so, we need to set spiritual goals. If, on the other hand, we spend our time haphazardly without knowing where we are going, then we will have a hard time reaching our aspirations. In the spiritual arena, our goals consist of spending time in meditation and in improving our ethical life.

It is good to read scriptures to find out how others reached the spiritual realms. It is also inspirational to know that others have found the doorway within. Until we enter it ourselves, however, we can never feel fully sure and satisfied. It is like hearing about the sweetness of sugar but never tasting it for ourselves. These sweets are available for one and all. Let us tap inside and partake of the gifts of love and light within us.

Sant Rajinder Singh

The above is an excerpt of a talk given recently by Sant Rajinder Singh, head of Science of Spirituality and teacher of the ancient form of yoga known as Surat Shabd yoga or meditation on the Divine Inner Light and Sound. For more see www.sos.org or contact Judy at 604-530-0589. See also the Resource Directory events section ad.

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continued from page 4

of the airport. The baggage examination began with the cutting of my stuffed dog. Yes silly me I took a stuffed animal instead of something important. Nothing was found in there after they destroyed and handed it back to me with a smirk.

"Open the suitcase." Nothing, phew.

"Go to that room and undress," said the soldier. I did. An officer came in, examined me, and took off my jewelry. "You are allowed only one bangle. You have two bangles. You have then glued them together and you also have two necklaces. You aren't allowed."

Michael Kusugak

The next moment I heard a gunshot and the man disappeared. I had heard an English girl wail because they were searching her things. Her father had become alarmed and rushed into the area past the guards. They had shot him and the girl was screaming.

I dressed, went to the desk where the soldier had left my jewelry and grabbed it silently. Just then the boarding announcement was made. "Flight 707 leaving for London. All passengers should begin boarding."

I grabbed my stuff, exited the airport and started walking to the plane. I saw my family standing on the balcony of the airport waving. I stopped, turned back and yelled "I got the jewelry, don't worry."

My mother put her finger on her mouth, my signal to shut up and board the plane.

I did. I began my long flight to my brother's place in Hamilton, Ontario for a brief reunion. He was studying at McMaster and had been there for a year.

Once again I left, excited but nervous for Oregon. I was going to be staying with a wonderful family. The CIA agent's brother and family were to be my new family. They loved me and took care of me and were prepared to adopt me if my parents didn't make it to Canada.

I made pocket money by cooking Indian food. I had never cooked in my life, I baby sat and even sent money to my sister in West Virginia. I was bumped up by three grades and lived from day to day.

I wanted to go home. My parents had made it to Vancouver but the Canadian consulate in San Francisco said I couldn't join them. I sat in the consular office and pleaded until they stamped my passport and I came to Vancouver.

We were reunited all but my sister. This wonderful country had sent planes to Kampala and processed my family. We were landed immigrants. We had lived.

Many years later at a small luncheon with Pierre Elliot Trudeau, I told him my story with tears in my eyes. He told me that he was proud to be a part of my reunion and said, "you Ugandans have only added to this country. I am proud to have been a part of this vision where a pluralistic society can thrive. After all we get the best don't we?" Then he surprised me by saying, "Tell me more about the CIA agent."

Umeeda Switlo 1994 at Sunflower Sundays in Vanier Park- introducing Sarah McLaughlan

Umeeda Switlo, searched six months for stories, contacting numerous groups and story tellers using the internet. The theme for the 13th annual Vancouver International Storytelling Festival is "Long ago, far away but it could have been just yesterday." For more on the November 19-21 festival www.vancouverstorytelling.org

Monks and meatpuppets

SLOTH'S GRAND TOUR FROM THE CHRISTIAN CATACOMBS TO THE HOLIDAY PACKAGE

Story and art by Geoff Olson

How did sloth ever come to be considered one of the seven deadly sins? It just doesn't seem to measure up to the six other offences. But think about the level of insult, in comparison to the others. Calling someone greedy or money-obsessed is regarded as a compliment in some quarters. As for lust, even the most baroque kink is regarded as no more outrageous than alpine yodeling. Pride is regularly confused with self-esteem. Envy is the mainstay of the fashion industry and the advertising world as a whole. Anger is not cool, but hey, we all have to blow off a little steam sometimes. But sloth? Watch it. Accuse your neighbour in the next cubicle of congress with the pooch, and you better be ready with documented evidence. For sheer insult, only an accusation of gluttony comes close - "fat pig" beats out "lazy slob," but the distance is closing.

It seems like most of us hardly have time for sloth. As a culture, we've never been busier. Many workers are holding down more than one job, putting in 60-plus hours of work a week. We live in a time that celebrates high-speed action and boundless physicality. Yet ironically, there has never been greater indolence and isolation in the North American population, fed by television, the internet and video games.

In combination with that other so-called sin, gluttony, this has meant our health has hugely declined as a population. It's estimated that obesity and physical inactivity costs Canada $3.1 billion annually and leads to the death of about 21,000 Canadians a year. Over the next decade, at least 3 million Canadians are expected to develop Type 2 diabetes, a lifestyle disease preventable by good nutrition and physical exercise.

Yet sloth is more than laziness and idleness. In the original sense meant by the early Christians, it is a surrender to despair. Sloth annihilates the will. In this sense, the condition is akin to clinical depression, which is characterized by a retreat from most activities, social or otherwise. Yet few of us think of sloth as a sin in any real sense. At most we see it as a character flaw, and with the rise of the reporting and treatment of clinical depression, as an illness.

A Christian monk named John Cassian, who lived in the Egyptian desert more than 1,000 years ago, knew the condition intimately.

"It is a torpor, a sluggishness of the heart; consequently is closely akin to dejection; it attacks those monks who wander from place to place and those who live in isolation. It is the most dangerous and the most persistent enemy of the solitaries."

Long before the rise of Christianity, Greeks and Romans understood what would later be known in the Middle Ages as "melancholy." The Latin poet Virgil's phrase, "lacrimae rerum, the tears of things," describes sadness implicit in life itself. Today John Cassian would be put on a regimen of Paxil, Effexor, or any one of the many antidepressants that have been prescribed to 25 percent of the US population. (And Virgil might be writing ad copy for the Pfizer account.) Never before have we seen sloth - in Cassian's depressive sense-grip the North American population as it has in the past decade, and never before has it been more profitable to treat.

NEWS
PROZAC
And in business news, drug manufacturer Eli Lilly has announced an agreement with Pez Candy Inc. for the over-the-counter distribution of its popular antidepressant, Prozac.
Future Pez dispensers will feature the heads of such famous depressives as Winston Churchill, Buzz Aldrin, and Marie Osmond.
OLSON

It's a complicated topic, to say the least. How much of the current discontent out there is due to the pharmaceutical industry "pathologizing" an inevitable human condition? And how much of it stems from a heightened reaction to modernity, where every trend has a half-life of a week, and certainty (job-wise or otherwise), is a thing of the past? And in any case, who would begrudge sufferers access to medication that often delivers them from the worst aspects of this existential scourge? But when antidepressants are routinely distributed by teaching staff to students in some US high schools, we have cause to wonder how much of a mood-manipulated society we are becoming. Aldous Huxley's novel, Brave New World, with everyone going to the "feelies" high on "soma," is looking less like fiction and more like fact.

Sloth appears to have been spun into a "deadly spin," a condition that is both reinforced and "remedied" by hypercapitalism.

An interesting analogy comes from animal behaviour studies, as described in Andrew Solomon's seminal work on depression, The Noonday Demon. "Learned helplessness occurs when an animal is subjected to a painful stimulus in a situation in which neither fight nor flight is possible. The animal will enter a docile state that greatly resembles human depression." In experiments on learned helplessness, changes occur in rats' brains that resemble the neurochemical fingerprint of depression in human brains.

How much of today's explosion of sloth, in the sense of a loss of vitality and purpose, is the psychocultural manifestation of learned helplessness?

For a great many urban dwellers, the demanding pace of daily life makes a certain kind of stillness - a zenlike capacity to be peacefully in the moment - all but impossible. This stillness is not sloth, but its psychological mirror reflection. It's the sense of deep peace long promised us by organized religion, psychoanalysis, or other belief systems. Today the pharmaceutical companies, along with the global travel industry, are the ones to pitch this promise of peace. If we can just get of Dodge and into some tropical retreat, we are told in travel ads, nirvana is ours. These ads regularly display scenes of office or rush-hour agony, followed by shots of some far-off beach retreat with palm trees. The camera focuses on some mid-management meatpuppet on holiday, reclining in an Adirondack chair, with a goblet the size of a fishbowl. Lulled by the crash of surf instead of white noise from the office, she glories in the free two weeks she has been working towards the other 50. Yet as the camera pans away, we see her tapping away at her laptop.

> Yet sloth is more than laziness and idleness. In the original sense meant by the early Christians, it is a surrender to despair. Sloth annihilates the will.

Writes Erik Davis, in his book Techgnosis, "The message of those Arcadian TV spots, showing folks hanging out on tropical beaches with their laptops and cell phones, is simple and tyrannical: we are only free and fulfilled when we remain on the grid, on schedule, on call."

From the telemarketer working two shifts, to the Hollywood North cyberprole stuck in a chair 12 hours a day rendering fast-edit mayhem, many of us seem to combine frantic busyness with the physical equivalent of sloth. When some do manage to escape the grip of work, they often find we have no energy at all to do much more than channel-surf. They

continued on page 31

Readers answer the big question

Hearty congratulations on your editorial chutzpah in running this superb essay. Rarely have I felt so respected and loved by an author. Geoff Olson shows us his amazing intellect and deeply compassionate being in an article that probes the depths and heights of the human experience. And thank you for including the full text on your website so I could send the link to my friends.

Common Ground continues to set a high standard for spiritual journalism. And the price is right.

Andy Vine,
Vancouver

I can hardly contain my pleasure at discovering your article, Is the Universe Friendly? nor can I right now form a coherent expression of this pleasure to offer you in thanks.

Last night my sister took me to Greens & Gourmet where she picked up Common Ground. How serendipitous was that? Well, on my visit to West Vancouver from Ontario, only a few days ago I purchased a vintage copy of The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy, which was my favourite all-time movie, seen on TV 20 years ago, although I had never read the book. Then your article.

Just one thing not mentioned in your piece but certainly related, and maybe even implied, the self-organizing principle of the theories of chaos and complexity. But enough about my preferences and predilections. Your article was a first rate work of art which gave me great pleasure and which I will share with all my intellectual friends, and I congratulate you on it and thank you sincerely for it.

Yours truly,
Ron Lewis,
Ontario

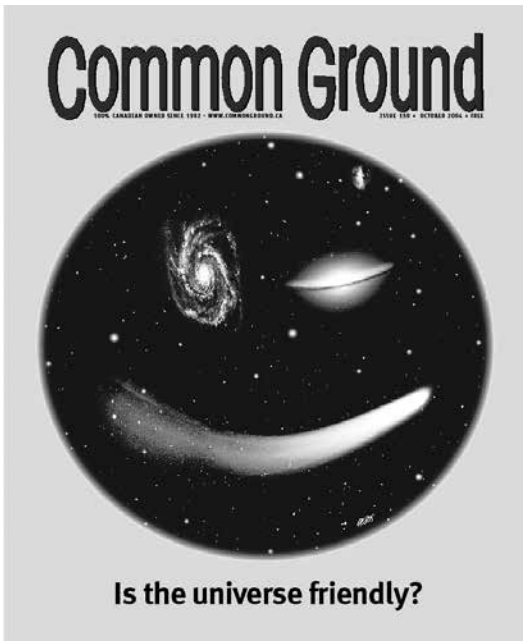
Funny thing.... I have been wondering a lot myself about the very concepts you put forth in this article - fascinating ideas that I have been coming to in my own thoughts as well over the past few years. I am bookmarking this article and sending it out to friends. I believe there may be some kind of "truth" in what you say, based on my own experiences of late.... at least it is well worth considering.

I personally had already decided to try to put what positive spin I can on things... it's not what we are taught as a culture and so difficult to get into that groove sometimes... but what have I got to lose? It's been a very interesting time for me so far.

Thanks for a great, well written article - a lot of food for thought.... and thanks to Common Ground for making it available.

Maggie Shields
Clinton, Massachusetts

Hello, I just read your article. It is very well written and I appreciate reading it. Thank you for your insights, especially the snakes and gophers and the first rule of digging holes. I liked the first Christian God that we conquered and "the second god, capital, has its own bipolar disorder." Needless to say, I broke off from "traditional thinking" years ago and tend to follow my own course of learning and entertainment. I don't understand why people pay "tithing" to a person or church



just to have someone rule over them. Ha! Freedom comes in many forms.

Have a great day, and thank you.
Elaine Kettring
Gallatin, Missouri

Your excellent article is one of the best that I have read in a long time. Do a Google on Amit Goswami. He's a doctor of physics who wrote: The Self Aware Universe and Physics of the Soul.

The most coherent and complete theory that resolves all the seeming paradoxes of quantum and classical physics and in doing so aligns it with spirituality at a fundamental level where all major religions can meet.

I believe he should be one of the most revered men of the entire modern era... But most people don't have enough working grey cells to understand what he's talking about... So the world stumbles along and his books go out of print...

Andreas Pfister
Herrliberg, Switzerland

I just read your article, Is the Universe Friendly? in its entirety and let me tell you, it really struck a chord with me. Interestingly enough, I've recently been studying ancient Toltec wisdom and much of what you say in your article seems to corroborate the Toltec teachings.

It's utterly amazing. Now is this an ultimate coincidence that I have received your article? Or is it part of my creative intent in my own research? Interesting, isn't it? Well, I'd just like to recommend to you a couple books by Don Miguel Ruiz, The Four Agreements, and The Mastery of Love; they might amaze you as well, and give you some more insight related to your article.

Thanks,
Darth Miina,
Kirkland, Washington
PS Yes, the universe is friendly.

I congratulate you for the brilliant and thought-provoking article. This article is more of a scientific article than a philosophical one. But you have very efficiently mixed up the two aspects to make your point.

Personally I think that the universe is hostile. Rarity of complex life forms in the universe is the proof. The answer can be found in the book Rare Earth by Peter Ward and Donald Brownlee. The authors argue that, though microbes may be common in the universe, existence of complex life forms, much less intelligent ones, is rare. This is because of unfavourable conditions, ranging from galactic density of stars, stability and composition of stars and imbalanced planetary systems, to the absence of the right type of tectonic movement in a planet. Obviously this scenario points to a hostile universe.

Bijan K. Basak,
Vancouver

I really enjoyed your article Is the Universe Friendly?

A thoughtful and thought provoking piece; it made me think back to "coincidences" where I spent a lot of energy thinking about a question or problem that I was dealing with and received an answer or solution in a short period of time afterwards in a seemingly unrelated event.

I also enjoyed the part about the universe being really generous in creating synonymous happenings that correlate to our conscious world belief.

And maybe it's not the universe but ourselves that manifest these happenings in order to protect ourselves from the onslaught of the multi-faceted reality that we do indeed actually live in.

Like our ego has a built in mechanism set to auto-protect ourselves when something does happen that doesn't correlate to our worldview.

Or what if the universe is a gigantic bird and we are its prey, like little mice being raised as food for a larger predator.

However, whatever the universe is, I am going to continue living my life to the highest standard that I am able to achieve, right now, right on.

Kudos to Common Ground for publishing such an excellent article,

Brenzen Chato,
Vancouver

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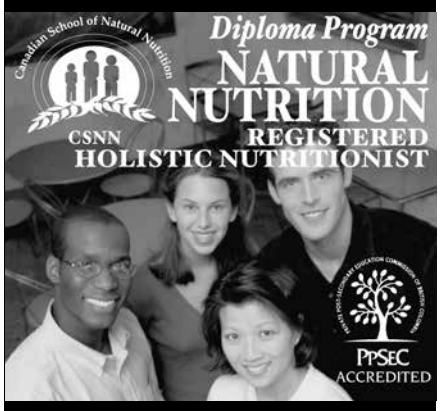

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ontinued from page 10

And not incidentally, into unemployment and poverty.

The Catch-22 for many nations in debt to international lending agencies is that they soon cannot even afford to pay the interest on the interest. As more debt accrues, further loans are preconditioned on the acceptance of "structural adjustment programs," which means the reduction or elimination of social programs. The banks also expect the privatization of any remaining national industries, resulting in further decline in governments' revenue base and freeing up industries to offshore predation. This kind of economic shock therapy is part and parcel of the so-called "Washington consensus." The borrowing nation soon finds itself in a three-legged race with the IMF and World Bank, collapsing at the finish line. (In a number of Third World countries, IMF has an English language modification of "I'm fired.")

The Argentine debt crisis meant big bucks for offshore investors. According to The San Francisco Examiner, the free flow of capital opened the gates for "vulture funds," which bought up the debt to make a killing on higher interest rates. Canada was not entirely an innocent bystander. The Toronto Trust Argentina market fund made a 79 percent return on debts it purchased - 30 times what it would have made holding US treasury bonds.

Selling off Argentina's public sector for parts meant fire sale prices for offshore investors. In fact, Argentina is a fiscal success story from the point of view of the banks. And this "success" isn't unique to Argentina; other nations have watched their public sector shrink and their sovereignty evaporate under these lending regimes. Client indebtedness generates big bucks, and there's money to be made in poverty. This is not just metaphorically true, but technically precise (former World Bank chief economist Joseph Stieglitz said as much in an interview with investigative reporter Greg Palast. There have been some mea culpas and self-questioning within the international lending community in the past few years. How much this will translate into action, only time will tell.) In September of this year, Argentina's current president, Nestor Kirchner, called IMF head Rodrigo Rato an old-style "plantation owner" for trying to force the nation to swallow free-market reforms as a condition for aid.

Context is important, because otherwise we might make the mistake of seeing Argentina as an isolated case, a worst-case scenario in free market economics, when it's just one more species in a genus of global disorder - as is British Columbia and the Liberals' sell-off of public assets.

In one scene in The Take, Freddy inspects his abandoned auto plant. "There used to be pigeons," he says, looking up into the overhead beams, adding with a rueful smile, "maybe they took those too." The Take, a powerful film about taking back hope, is well worth seeing. The Argentinean Catch-22 of indentured servitude to the global economy has lessons for viewers everywhere.

Geoff Olson is a Vancouver writer and political cartoonist gefo@telus.net

What is real?

UNIVERSE WITHIN

by Gwen Randall-Young

We make life real
By the thoughts we project
- Deng Ming-Dao

Can you remember being in high school and having to interpret a poem? You may have wondered how in the world you could have any idea what the author intended by such abstract expressions and unfamiliar references. Every reader could come away with a different interpretation, depending on how the author's expression of experience interacted with the reader's experiences and interpretations. I have come to realize that, in a sense, our lives are like a poem, one that can be interpreted in many different ways.

As a therapist, I have listened to thousands of clients as they sorted out the events of their lives, and their internal experience of those events. Naturally there are myriad versions of similar events: a difficult or abusive childhood, troubled relationships, work stresses or conflicts, challenges with children, losses and major life changes.

How we feel about ourselves and our lives is a consequence of the meaning we assign to the "story" - an individual event that has occurred, or a life pattern. Imagine looking through a kaleidoscope and seeing a complex image. Little bits of coloured glass combined with mirrors create varying patterns. The slightest turn of the kaleidoscope changes the "picture" completely. So it is that the slightest turn in our perception of a situation in our lives changes the big picture as well.

How we feel about ourselves and our lives is a consequence of the meaning we assign to the "story" - an individual event that has occurred, or a life pattern.

Imagine now, that when you looked through the kaleidoscope, the image you saw was projected onto a large screen. The same little bits of glass create a multitude of different pictures. Think of the events in your life as little bits of glass. Imagine that they can be combined and recombined creating patterns which may be radically different from one another. Our consciousness is the mirror that reflects one of those patterns onto the screen that is our life, and that pattern becomes our reality. It is almost as though we step into that particular version of reality and live it as if it were indeed the reality.

What if we do not like it? Typically, we go to the screen and try to rearrange the pattern, but that is not where it is coming from. It is coming from our perception that is projected onto the screen. In order to change what we are seeing out there, we have to change how we perceive in here. This is complex and difficult to do, because we have grown up in a culture that is based on a societal consensus that reality is what is out there. As in the story, The Emperor's New Clothes, where everyone agreed to pretend they could see fabulous garments adorning the naked emperor, our culture operates on the basis of an unspoken agreement to take our projections as reality.

We may feel as though we are entering a vast no man's land, drifting and detached from the mainstream, when we begin the process of sitting back and releasing our hold on that "one reality." It can feel overwhelming to realize the level of responsibility we have when we become aware of the implications of the perceptual perspective we choose - implications for ourselves and others.

It can also be empowering and freeing to recognize we have control over the "lenses" we place on our perceptual process. Negative lenses include judgment, blame, criticism and polarity, while positive lenses include compassion, understanding, love, and unity.

Becoming familiar with our ability to shift and choose perceptions, and to add or remove "lenses," will change the way we see the world, will change how we experience it, and will change us. Perhaps this is what is meant by enlightenment or illumination: as much a change in how we see, as in what we see.

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and Chartered Psychologist in private practice. Her new book, Growing Into Soul: The Next Step in Human Evolution is available through her website, www.gwen.ca or gwendall@shaw.ca

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Self suffering

STILLNESS SPEAKS

by Eckhart Tolle

Naming and labeling are habitual, but that habit can be broken. Start practising "not naming" with small things. If you miss the plane, drop and break a cup, or slip and fall in the mud, can you refrain from naming the experience as bad or painful? Can you immediately accept the "isness" of that moment?

Naming something as bad causes an emotional contraction within you. When you let it be, without naming it, enormous power is suddenly available to you.

The contraction cuts you off from that power, the power of life itself.

~

They ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Go beyond good and bad by refraining from mentally labeling anything as good or bad. When you go beyond the habitual naming, the power of the universe moves through you. When you are in a nonreactive relationship to experiences, what you would have called "bad" before often turns around quickly, if not immediately, through the power of life itself.

Watch what happens when you don't name an experience as "bad" and instead bring an inner acceptance, an inner "yes" to it, and so let it be as it is.

~

Whatever your life situation is, how would you feel if you completely accepted it as it is - right Now?

~

There are many subtle and not so subtle forms of suffering that are so "normal" they are usually not recognized as suffering and may even feel satisfying to the ego - irritation, impatience, anger, having an issue with something or someone, resentment, complaining.

You can learn to recognize all those forms of suffering as they happen and know: at this moment, I am creating suffering for myself.

If you are in the habit of creating suffering for yourself, you are probably creating suffering for others too. These unconscious mind patterns tend to come to an end simply by making them conscious, by becoming aware of them as they happen.

You cannot be conscious and create suffering for yourself.

~

This is the miracle: behind every condition, person, or situation that appears "bad" or "evil" lies concealed a deeper good. That deeper good reveals itself to you - both within and without - through inner acceptance of what is.

"Resist not evil" is one of the highest truths of humanity.

~

A dialogue:

Accept what is.

I truly cannot. I'm agitated and angry about this.

Then accept what is.

Accept that I'm agitated and angry? Accept that I cannot accept?

Yes. Bring acceptance into your nonacceptance. Bring surrender into your nonsurrender. Then see what happens.

~

Chronic physical pain is one of the harshest teachers you can have. "Resistance is futile" is its teaching.

Nothing could be more normal than an unwillingness to suffer. Yet if you can let go of that unwillingness, and instead allow the pain to be there, you may notice a subtle inner separation from the pain, a space between you and the pain, as it were. This means to suffer consciously, willingly. When you suffer consciously, physical pain can quickly burn up the ego in you, since ego consists largely of resistance. The same is true of extreme physical disability.

You "offer up your suffering to God" is another way of saying this.

~

You don't need to be a Christian to understand the deep universal truth that is contained in symbolic form in the image of the cross.

The cross is a torture instrument. It stands for the most extreme suffering, limitation and helplessness a human being can encounter. Then suddenly that human being surrenders, suffers willingly, consciously, expressed through the words, "Not my will but Thy will be done." At that moment, the cross, the torture instrument, shows its hidden face: it is also a sacred symbol, a symbol for the divine.

That which seemed to deny the existence of any transcendental dimension to life, through surrender becomes an opening into that dimension.

~

Excerpted from Stillness Speaks, by Eckhart Tolle, $17 hardcover. Published by New World Library, toll free 1-800-972-6657 Ext. 52 www.newworldlibrary.com

Sahaja yoga born with you

Humans in their search for joy and happiness are running away from their inner Self, the real source of joy. Human beings seek joy in money or possessions, in power or human-limited love, and/or in religion. The problem is how to turn one's attention inward.

Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi

The inner being, which is our awareness, is an energy, the energy of divine love. All evolution and the manifestation of material energy are guided by the supreme energy of divine love.

Sahaja yoga is a method of taping into the energy of divine love, a meditation which brings a breakthrough in the evolution of human awareness. It was created by Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi in 1970 and has since spread around the world.

The Sanskrit word Sahaja means born with you or inborn. Whatever is inborn manifests without any effort. Hence Sahaja yoga is the name given to this system, which is effortless, easy and spontaneous. It is a living process, which you can verify on your own central nervous system.

In Shri Mataji's words: "Global unity of mankind can be achieved through this awakening that can occur within each human being, so that transformation takes place within us. By this process a person becomes moral, united, integrated and balanced. One actually gets the experience of the feeling of the all-pervading divine power as cool breeze. "Know thyself" is the main theme of all the scriptures - it becomes evident and one reaches the absolute understanding of oneself.

Thus one becomes peaceful and joyous in life. One becomes collective as a drop falling into the ocean of compassion. This method works for the multitudes and not individually. Of course one cannot pay for the experience of divine love. Moreover, it is the last breakthrough of our evolution. This is the actualization of such transformation, which is taking place now, worldwide, and has been proved and experienced by hundreds of thousands in more than 85 countries."

This inner awakening is achieved by awakening of one's own kundalini. It is also called self-realization, second birth, enlightenment, liberation, moksha and satori. The goal of all humans is to find inner peace.

This knowledge is ancient, but for a long time it was available only to a few, being kept secret and transmitted from guru to disciple, since self realization was extremely difficult to achieve. In these modern times, through Sahaja (Sanskrit for spontaneous) yoga (union with one's Self), this experience has become effortless and available to everyone, for the first time in the history of human spirituality.

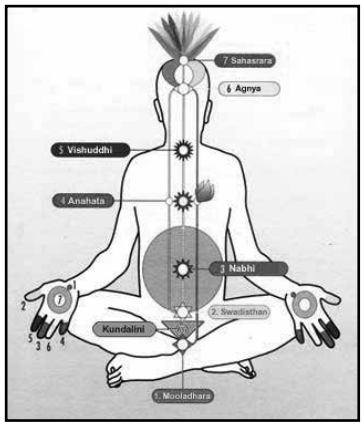
> The inner being, which is our awareness, is an energy, the energy of divine love. All evolution and the manifestation of material energy are guided by the supreme energy of divine love.

Through the practice of Sahaja yoga, our awareness gains a new dimension where absolute truth can be felt tangibly on our central nervous system. As a result of this happening, our spiritual ascent takes place effortlessly and physical, mental and emotional balance are achieved as a by product of this growth of our awareness.

We then realize that we are not this body, mind, ego, conditionings, emotions or intellect, but something of an eternal nature, which is always residing in our heart in a pure, undisturbed state, the Self or spirit. The spirit is the source of true knowledge, peace and joy. Self realization is the actualization of this connection with our spirit, which as Shri Mataji advocates, is the birthright of every human being.

"It is important for everyone to have that knowledge of the roots within themselves. Sahaja yoga allows the individual to become his own spiritual guide," she says.

Sahaja yoga classes are offered worldwide, free of charge. For more see http://sahajayoga.com or www.sahajayoga.ca



Getting heard is harder than ever

SCIENCE MATTERS

by David Suzuki

This year marks my 25th as host of The Nature of Things. Recently, an interviewer asked how television programs have changed over a quarter of a century. Reflecting on the answer, I think that the changes in programs mirror changes in society.

The Nature of Things began as a series in 1960 and is the longest-running series on CBC today. From Anik 1, our first communications satellite, to the birth control pill, test-tube babies, computers, genetic engineering, pollution and climate change, the series has brought important issues to a large and loyal Canadian audience. You could say the program has been an electronic bridge, connecting the country and keeping us abreast of the consequences of science when applied by industry, medicine and the military. In contrast, the United States has never had a science program in prime time on any of the major networks!

Since I began my television career, there has been an explosive growth in the number of competing channels, to say nothing of computers and the internet. And once remote controls came along, viewers became mighty skittish, flicking from channel to channel like hummingbirds.

In such a world, how do we attract and keep an audience? The same way everyone else does - by shouting, by being sensational, sexier, more violent and more superficial. When I began as host of The Nature of Things, we attracted between 18 and 25 percent of the audience at that time and when a rating of less than a million and half viewers came in, we were very worried. We haven't had a million people in over 10 years. In fact, the last time we had a blockbuster audience was for a program titled Phallacies, all about the penis.

[The Nature of Things]...has been an electronic bridge, connecting the country and keeping us abreast of the consequences of science when applied by industry, medicine and the military.

In the neurosciences, there is a fascinating phenomenon called "habituation." When a neuron is isolated with an electrode inserted to measure electrical impulses, it can be stimulated and shown to be excited with an electrical discharge. When the stimulus is repeated, the response is smaller and slower. But repeated stimulation results in no response, the neuron is habituated and has to be left alone for a while to recover its sensitivity to the stimulus. Psychologically, there is an analogous observation. When a buzzer goes off, we may be startled and find it too loud to think. But if the buzzer continues, over time, we find the noise recedes and we don't even notice it any more.

We can extend the analogy of neuronal habituation in our viewing habits. In the cacophony of programs all clamoring for attention, our demand for novelty increases so we want more jolts per minute or we think "it's boring," "it drags" or "it's too slow." And this habituation occurs even more rapidly among journalists. When I try to get media attention to climate change, I'm often told, "that's an old story," "what's the new angle?" or "we've covered that to death."

We can see it in our attention to terrorism. When a hostage is taken and murdered, we are shocked and outraged. But subsequent killings of hostages fail to elicit the same level of response; we've heard about it already. So in trying to get media attention, terrorists turn to multiple hostages, suicide bombings, taking over planes and using them as weapons, beheadings on camera, and capturing and murdering hundreds of children. Where will it end? The escalation in horror becomes a new threshold that the next one will have to top. And so it goes with environmental issues. Is it any wonder that environmentalists are sometimes dismissed as fear mongers in a world where dangers and risks must continually escalate or else be dismissed as yesterday's story? Surely we need a better way for society to engage in such important issues. Otherwise, in this game of one-upmanship, the public will always lose.

Take the Nature Challenge and learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org

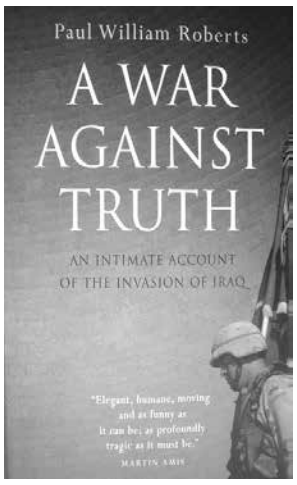
A War Against Truth

book review by Jim Holt

A War Against Truth is as much history as it is current events, unfolding in a masterpiece of imagery, which sheds light on dark disturbing forces in eastern and western governments past and present.

Paul William Roberts, MA, having taught literature at universities on three continents, now adds another piece to the universal sculpture of words all great writers have built over time. He opens this work with the terror he experiences in the "shock and awe" bombardment of Baghdad, where he is staying with Iraqi friends and travels to a hospital where there is no electricity, no water, no medicine, no bandages, no hope. The euphemistic shock and awe is soon replaced with what it was: terrorism against a civilian population.

In a remarkably succinct manner Roberts takes us from the dawn of civilization in Babylonian Iraq, through the bizarre influences of our forefathers since the crusades upon the Middle East. Condemning the conventional media collaboration as "embedded" public relations for the Pentagon, he is comical in his self-portrayal as "embedouined," travelling at times in Arab clothing. In fact he maintains throughout the journey and his book a sense of humour that adds tremendous relief even hope to this tragic but well-crafted narrative.


Paul William Roberts
A WAR AGAINST TRUTH
AN INTIMATE ACCOUNT OF THE INVASION OF IRAQ
"Elegant, humane, moving and as funny as it can be; as profoundly tragic as it must be."
MARTIN AMIS

His timelines, maps and excellent footnotes all provide sources to continue to explore the true nature of this war.

Whether to learn, laugh, cry or all of them, this is the next book you should read. Expect enlightening entertainment and a demand to involve yourself in a better world.

A War Against Truth: An Intimate Account of the Invasion of Iraq, Paul William Roberts, Raincoast Books 2004 www.raincoast.com Writer Jim Holt is a founding director of the Conservative Party of Canada in the new federal riding of Newton-North Delta. He recently supported Adrienne Carr of the Green Party in her bid to win a BC Legislature bi-election seat. jimholt@dccnet.com

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Sun, wind and electric vehicles

EARTHFUTURE.COM

by Guy Dauncey

This is a story about a car. Not the Toyota Prius hybrid, or the Mercedes SmartCar diesel that's now on the streets, cool looking though it is. A normal car with four wheels, two seats and an engine. But why should it merit space in Common Ground?

How about Vancouver to Calgary on 10 litres? Are we impressed yet? That's 1 litre per 100 kilometres or 285 miles per gallon. We'll have to retrain the "zoom zoom" boy to say "sip-sip."

The car in question is not in the showrooms. It is a prototype that Volkswagen built in 2002 to show that it could be done. VW created the Lupo in 1999, which uses 3 litres per 100 km, and it wanted to go one better.

Before I go into the details, think of this as a parable about engineers seeking greater efficiency, which could be applied to every area of life where we use energy. We're going to hit oil's downward supply curve very soon (maybe yesterday), so this is all very relevant.

The car is a two-seater, designed like a sports car, or a bobsled (see www.volkswagen.co.uk/new_devs/one_litre). It is 3.65 metres long, 1.25 metres wide and just over a metre high. Average speed 75 km/h, top speed 120 km/h. Single cylinder direct injection diesel engine, so it could also run on biodiesel.

Now diesel exhaust is a known carcinogen, due to the emission of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and nitrated polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (nPAH). Exposure to diesel exhaust accounts for more than 70 percent of the cancer risk from toxic air contaminants in California, and is a major contributor to ozone pollution, that may lead to shortness of breath, chest pain, wheezing and coughing and is a particular threat to children.

However, biodiesel carries less of these sins. It reduces most PAH compounds by 80 percent and nPAH compounds by 90 percent, while providing up to a 90 percent reduction in lifecycle carbon dioxide emissions, a 67 percent reduction in unburned hydrocarbons, a 48 percent reduction in carbon monoxide emissions, a 47 percent reduction in particulate matter emissions, and a 100 percent reduction in sulphur emissions.

Everything has been done to reduce the car's weight down to 290 kg. The body is made from composite carbon-fibre reinforced material, with a reinforced plastic outer skin concealing a frame made from magnesium. Most of the parts are aluminum; the gears and shafts are hollow; the bolts are made of titanium.

In "overrun" mode, the engine switches off and the car glides. Press the accelerator, and it starts up again. The wheels have regenerative braking, similar to the Prius, feeding energy to the alternator. For safety, it's got anti-lock brakes, an electronic stability program, a driver's airbag, and the same impact and overturn protection standards as a GT racing car. Work to develop the car entailed close cooperation with numerous suppliers, who developed new concepts and redesigned their parts, making them lighter.

Now forget dirty diesel, or even biodiesel, and think electric. If a small electric car used the VW breakthroughs, it would need less power to move it. In 1996, General Motors released the EV1, a four-seater electric vehicle that weighed 1,325 kg, 4.5 times more than the VW. It has since been withdrawn, because GM has recalled and scrapped all its electric vehicles, believing the future is in hydrogen and hybrids. I think GM is deeply mistaken, but that's another story.

Cruising at 72 km/h, the EV1 used 115 watt/hours of electricity per mile. That's little more than a 100 watt light bulb, burning for an hour. At 96 km/h, it used 164 watt/hours per mile. If a small two-seater VW EV weighed 4.5 times less, it would need three times less electricity, with two passengers and luggage, reducing the power needed to say 50 watt/hours per mile. The new lithium ion batteries last nearly 320 kilometres between charges, so range is not really an issue, especially if you belong to a car share coop and can choose a vehicle to meet your need.

For 16,000 kilometres a year, the car would draw 500 kWh a year. At 6 cents a kWh, with electricity from the wind or hydro, that would cost you just $2.50 a month.

If you wanted to install a solar panel on your roof to deliver 500 kWh a year in Vancouver, with 2,000 hours of sunshine a year, a 275 watt system would be sufficient and last for 25 years. That would cost $5,342 Canadian from www.energyalternatives.ca, plus $1,400 for installation (could be d-i-y) and the net metering and electrical permit expenses. Call it $6,750. With a 6.5 percent 25 year mortgage, no down payment, your monthly payment would be $45. As the world demand for solar electric panels rises and production increases, the cost could fall by half. With the panel connected to the grid, the lack of winter sunshine would not be a problem since you would treat the grid like a bank, paying in or drawing out energy as you needed it.

A wind-electric car for $2.50 a month. A solar-electric car for $45 a month. Who needs oil?

For contrast, a car that uses 9 litres per 100 km (25 mpg) will use 1,818 litres of fuel per year and cost you $151 a month. When the price of gasoline doubles, that'll be $300 a month, or 10 times more than the wind-electric car.

Guy Dauncey is president of the BC Sustainable Energy Association www.bcsea.org, which has chapters in Vancouver, Kamloops and Victoria. His personal website is www.earthfuture.com.

D O T H E R I G H T T H I N G

Congratulations to Ethics in Action Award Recipients!

On Thursday, October 21, 2005, eight outstanding British Columbia-based companies received Ethics in Action™ Awards for "Doing the Right Thing" for their customers, the environment and the community.

The awards were presented in four categories
for either Small or Medium Businesses (under 250) or Large Businesses (over 250).

The four award categories are:
Community Care • Environmental Excellence • Overall Leadership • Individual Impact

2004 AWARD RECIPIENTS:

Community Care, Large Business, goes to … Duke Energy Gas Transmission.
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Yogi Bhajan

HIS SPIRITUAL LEGACY 1929 - 2004

Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji, 75, known as Yogi Bhajan to hundreds of thousands of adherents worldwide, left his physical body at 9 pm MDT on October 6 at his home in Espanola, New Mexico surrounded by family and friends. The cause of death was complications due to heart failure.

An outstanding pioneer in many fields with a deep and compassionate insight into the human condition, he established permanent institutions, created spectacular events, and produced a prolific body of teachings.

The first to publicly teach kundalini yoga when he arrived in 1968, he announced he had come to the West "to create teachers, not to gain students."

A deeply devoted Sikh, his inspiration and example motivated thousands to embrace the Sikh way of life. Through his personal efforts, Sikh Dharma was legally incorporated and officially recognized as a religion in the USA in 1971. The same year, in acknowledgement of his extraordinary impact of spreading the universal message of Sikhism, he was given the title of the Siri Singh Sahib, chief religious and administrative authority for the Western hemisphere by the governing body of Sikh temples.

Yogi Bhajan was born Harbhajan Singh Puri, August 26, 1929, in the part of India that became Pakistan in 1948. When he became a United States citizen in 1976, he changed his name legally to Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji.

When he was just eight years old he began his yogic training with his teacher who proclaimed him to be a master of kundalini yoga when he was 16.

He arrived in Canada in 1968 to teach yoga at the University of Toronto, his sponsor the Canadian High Commissioner in New Delhi. He later moved to Los Angeles and began teaching young hippies that the experience of higher consciousness they were attempting to find through drugs could be found through the practice of kundalini yoga.

The non-profit 3HO Foundation (Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization) was incorporated in 1969 to serve humanity through kundalini yoga, meditation and the science of humanology which improves physical well being, as well as deepening spiritual awareness.

There are now 300 centers in 35 countries. In 1994, 3HO became a member of the United Nations as an NGO in consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council, representing women's

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Sat Dec 18 10 am - 1 pm & 3pm - 6 pm
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issues, promoting human rights and providing education on alternative systems of medicine.

Yogi Bhajan, as the Mahan Tantric, the only living master of White tantric yoga, conducted workshops in cities around the world. In 1987 he transferred these workshops to videotape.

In 1973, Yogi Bhajan founded 3HO SuperHealth, a successful drugless, drug rehabilitation program, blending the proven ancient yogic wisdom of the East with the modern technology of the West. Currently a pilot project of SuperHealth is being formed by the Punjab State government in India.

True to his earliest commitment, "I've not come to gather students, but to train teachers," the International Kundalini Yoga Teachers Association and the Kundalini Research Institute now holds teacher training courses throughout the world.

and Yogi Bhajan

Embodying a rare combination of spiritual and down-to-earth practical wisdom, Yogi Bhajan was equally at home in the pulpit, the podium, the board room, the living room, or sitting on the grass in a park, teaching and educating people from all walks of life. His expertise and influence extended into the realms of communication, the healing arts, business, religion and government.

Loyal friend and mentor of national and world leaders, he promoted spiritual awareness in all arenas. An ardent advocate of world peace and religious unity, he participated in many interfaith forums and conferences, including the World Parliament of Religions.

In June of 1985 he established the first International Peace Prayer Day celebration in New Mexico. This annual day of musical celebration and interfaith prayer draws several thousand participants, including prominent national and international leaders in the realms of religion, politics and humanity.

With a masters in economics and being a savvy entrepreneur he encouraged his students to start their own businesses, including the popular Yogi Tea, and Akal Security, a large US security service.

He was a champion of women's rights, and believed that it is women who are the backbone of society, and since 1972 when he inaugurated the first of what became annual women's camps, he taught technology to turn "chicks into eagles."

His motto was: "If you can't see God in all, you can't see God at all."

His credo: "It's not the life that matters, it's the courage that you bring to it." His challenge to students, "Don't love me, love my teachings. Become 10 times greater than me."

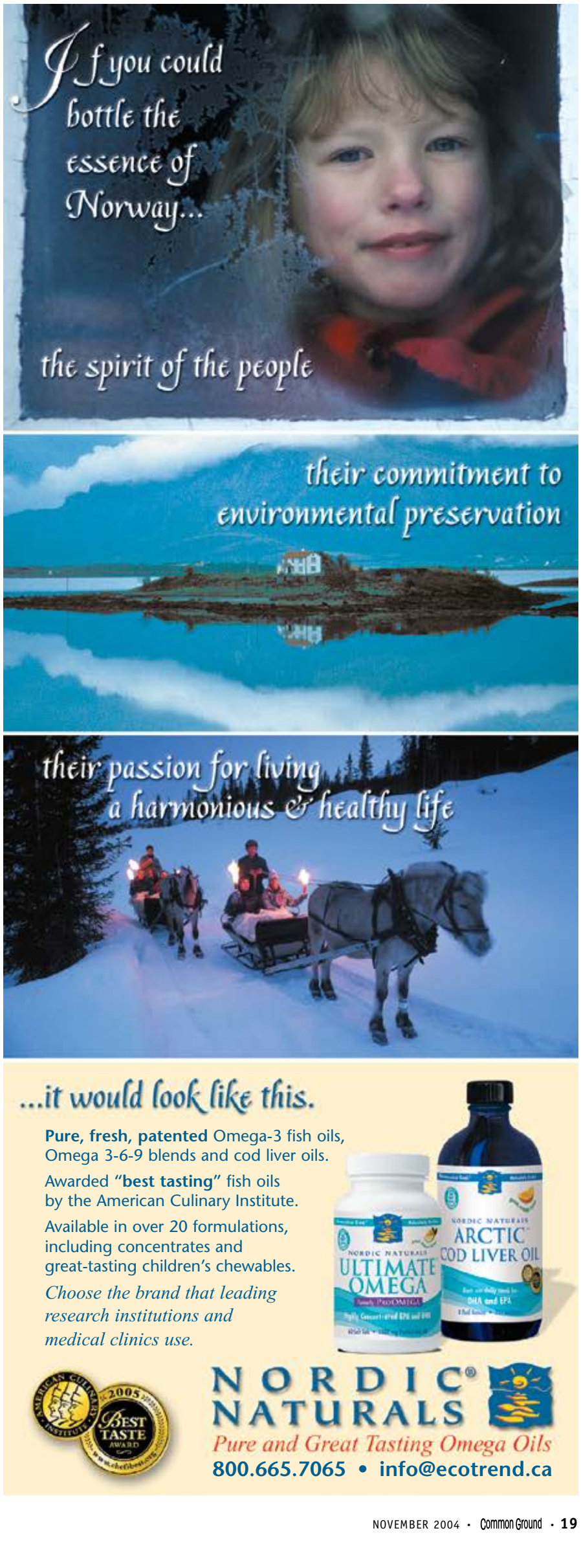
Although Yogi Bhajan has left his physical form, he asked that his students and those who knew him celebrate his homecoming. The light of his spiritual essence continues to bless all those whom he loved, and that is the entire human race.

He is survived by his wife, Siri Sardani Kaur Bhai Sahiba Bibi Inderjit Kaur Khalsa, three children, five grandchildren and all those in his 3HO and Sikh Dharma families. A Canadian memorial service was held in Surrey October 31.

In BC contact Raj Yog Nivas (Yoga West) for information 604-732-9642 www.yogawest.ca

If you would like to leave a message for Yogi Bhajan's family or staff please call 505-367-1661, or send email to ybmemorial@sikhdharma.org

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to The Kundalini Research Institute for the Library of the Teachings of Yogi Bhajan, PO Box 249, Santa Cruz, NM 87567 USA.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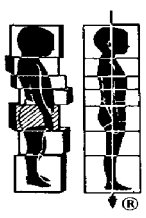

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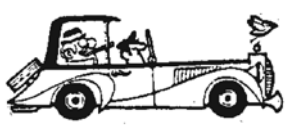

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- Anonymous

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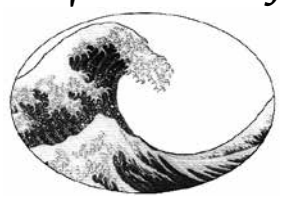

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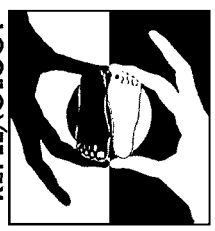

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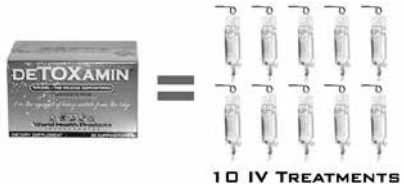

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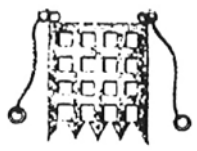

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One should neither be overly jubilant when flattered nor overly distressed when criticized.
- Anonymous

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Free November Jyoti Meditation Classes: 7:00 - 8:30pm every Wednesday evening in Vancouver: The Community Centre @ 801 West 22nd Avenue (between Oak & Cambie, near VGH) on November 3, 10, 17 & 24. Questions or to register contact Phil: 604-879-5881.
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Held in an alcohol and smoke free environment, this innovative community event is a unique opportunity to fully be in your joy and celebrative spirit. Come dance, let loose or mingle with an open-minded and fun-loving crowd.

Active meditation: 7:30 pm - Occasional free dance class: 8:30 pm - Dance: 9:00 pm. 2114 W.4th Ave. (at Arbutus). $8 at the door.
November 19 & 26, December 3 & 17
Info: www.just-dance.ca
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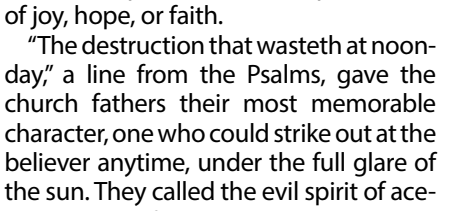

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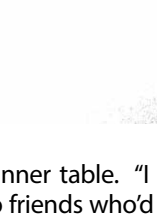

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Sloth the deadly spin part 2

Story and art by Geoff Olson

"In the middle of the journey of our life, I found myself in a dark wood, having lost the straight path."

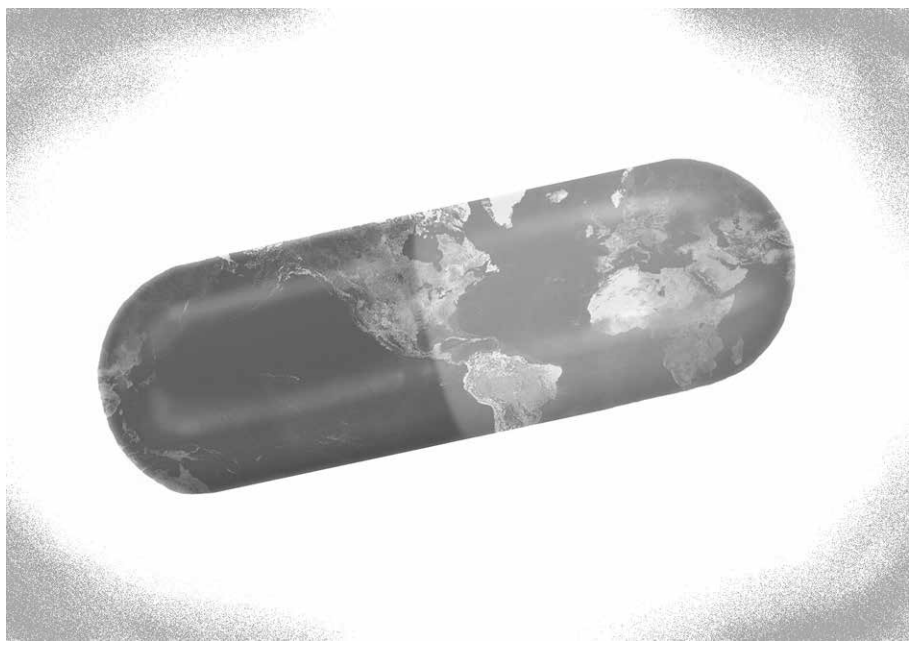
This is the opening line from The Inferno, a description of Dante's state of mind when he came upon a hole in the world that led down into the infernal realms. When I came across my own hole in the world several years ago, these words had special relevance for me. They prefaced a song by Marianne Faithful that I often played. Listening to her ravaged voice read out Dante's journey through the woods, I took some comfort in art's universal expression of a singularly isolating experience.

My first — and hopefully last — experience of clinical depression was preceded by a mix of personal and professional disappointments. Yet my experience, in retrospect, was all out of proportion with what I suspect were its triggers. There were days were I would sit for hours in a chair, staring at the floor. For the space of a year, I fell into sloth as it was meant in its original form as one of the "deadly sins": a state of complete and utter despair, devoid of joy, hope, or faith.

"The destruction that wasteth at noonday," a line from the Psalms, gave the church fathers their most memorable character, one who could strike out at the believer anytime, under the full glare of the sun. They called the evil spirit of acedia — Latin for sloth — The "Noonday Demon".

Writes Andrew Sullivan in his seminal book of the same name: "The image serves to conjure the terrible feeling of invasion that attends the depressive's plight. There is something brazen about depression. Most demons — most forms of anguish — rely on the cover of night; to see them clearly is to defeat them. Depression stands in the full glare of the sun, unchallenged by recognition. You can know the entire why and the wherefore and suffer just as much as if you were shrouded by ignorance. There is almost no other mental state of which the same can be said."

In today's culture, the vector for depression has been reversed. Purported negative influences from without have been internalized: the depressive's own brain has become the demon, and the corrective is not a hairshirt but a prescription.



While I was in the grip of my particular dark tea-time of the soul, I couldn't imagine suffering worse than mine. Yet the many personal cases Sullivan cites in his book demonstrates there are many rooms in the house of pain. There are catatonic depressives who literally cannot rise from their beds, terrified even by the thought of having to shower, who only improve through electroconvulsive treatment. (When Sullivan's own depressive periods struck, he could not venture out of his apartment, and his accompanying anxiety would fix on strange things — even on mundane, non-threatening items on the dinner table. "I can't join you," he'd say to friends who'd call in what became his signal that he was in bad shape, "I'm afraid of a pork chop again.")

In my case, I eventually went to a doctor and requested antidepressants. The doctor prescribed Paxil, one of the class of so-called "selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors." I didn't care for the side effects, and went off the Paxil after a few weeks, before the positive effects — if any, for me — could kick in.

New to the soul-eating experience of sloth, I eventually crawled out of my little corner of hell on my hands and knees, without therapy, without the aid of a drug. I may well have benefited by turning to the medical establishment earlier, so I have no idea how smart or dumb my latecomer's, aborted approach was.

I forced myself out of sloth by socializing with friends and family. But more specifically, I exercised, and with a rising level of fitness, my depression slowly leached away. Self-confidence and peace of mind returned to fill the space the Noonday Demon had hollowed out inside me. It's been four years since my return to inner peace.

Obviously, the depressive state of sloth doesn't occur in a social or psychological vacuum, and it's undoubtedly more multidimensional than just a glitch in people's heads, a Neural-drain Demon that strikes for some obscure biochemical reasons.

James Hillman is a well know Jungian psychotherapist and author. In his book We've Had a Hundred years of Psychotherapy and the World's Getting Worse, he relates an anecdote from a depressed patient who tells his therapist of the disturbing sight of a bag lady in the street. He can't shake the idea of his mother being in the bag lady's place. The therapist concludes that his client has some issues involving his mother. Hillman points out the therapist's reading of the situation may be only partially true, or even irrelevant, and offers a contrary interpretation: the man may be genuinely disturbed to live in a society that allows old women the freedom to sleep under bridges.

continued on page 33

Savoring winter squash

NUTRISPEAK

by Vesanto Melina MS, RD

As we move into the season of winter celebrations, we welcome warming meals shared with family and friends. Winter squash has many appealing qualities: these hearty vegetables form attractive, edible centerpieces at festive dinners; their dense texture is richly satisfying; they are rich in fibre, B vitamins such as folic acid and thiamin, and the protective phytochemicals known as carotenoids (beta-carotene and others).

For those with food sensitivities, squash is unlikely to trigger allergic responses. The recipes below are from our Food Allergy Survival Guide; however this combination of textures, flavour and excellent nutrition has wide appeal, far beyond those with food sensitivities.

Winter squashes come in a range of sizes and shapes such as Hubbard, butternut, acorn, delicata, kabocha and turban. The shell should be firm and hard all over. A heavy squash indicates the presence of moisture, making for a succulent, sweet and delicious finished product, whereas a lightweight squash tends to be drier and less flavourful.

Choose one with a dull rind; a glossy rind suggests an older squash or one that has been waxed. Store winter squash between 10° and 15°C and away from direct exposure to light. On the inside, those with the deepest-coloured flesh tend to be the sweetest. Squash may be mashed; chunks of squash add colour and texture to soups and stews; pureed it can be used in baked goods, custards, creamy soups, spreads and pies.

Stuffed squash

In some families or groups of friends, getting together to cook is one of the best parts of a celebration. Assembling this squash and a few side dishes can be the central activity for a wonderful day spent with the people you love. Serve wedges of the squash and stuffing with gravy made from onion, flour, herbs and tamari or miso, or use the recipe below. This stuffing can be used to stuff any vegetable. You may want to experiment with different grains such as buckwheat or couscous to replace the rice or quinoa. For larger groups, pick a bigger squash and adjust recipe accordingly.

1 large winter squash (about 5 pounds)

Stuffing:

2 cups water

1 large onion, chopped

1/2 cup white basmati rice, rinsed and drained

1/2 cup quinoa, rinsed well and drained

1 cup corn kernels (fresh, canned, or thawed frozen)

1/2 cup chopped walnuts (optional)

1/2 cup chopped sun-dried tomatoes packed in oil, drained

1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley

1 tbsp olive oil (optional)

1 tsp dried basil

1/2 tsp dried oregano

1/2 tsp crushed garlic

Salt and pepper

Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Pierce the top of squash with sharp knife at 45-degree angle. Pushing the knife blade away from your body, rotate the blade around the top of the squash to create a cone-shaped lid that you can remove and set aside. Using a large spoon, remove seeds and pulp from the cavity of the squash and discard. (Squash seeds are edible. If you like, you can hull and eat them in the same manner as pumpkin seeds.) Place the squash and lid on a baking sheet and bake for 30 minutes. Remove squash and lid from oven and set aside to cool for 15 minutes.

While squash is baking, place the water, onion, rice and quinoa in a large pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium, cover and simmer for 15 minutes. Remove from heat and let rest, covered, for 10 minutes. Fluff with a fork, and add the remaining ingredients.

Spoon stuffing into cavity of squash until it is almost full. Put the top in place and bake for 45 to 60 minutes or until a toothpick can be inserted easily into squash. If there is leftover stuffing, place it in a small pan, sprinkle with 2 to 3 tablespoons of water, cover the pan, and heat stuffing through for last 20 minutes of squash cooking time. Remove squash from oven and place on a warm serving platter. Slice into wedges to serve.

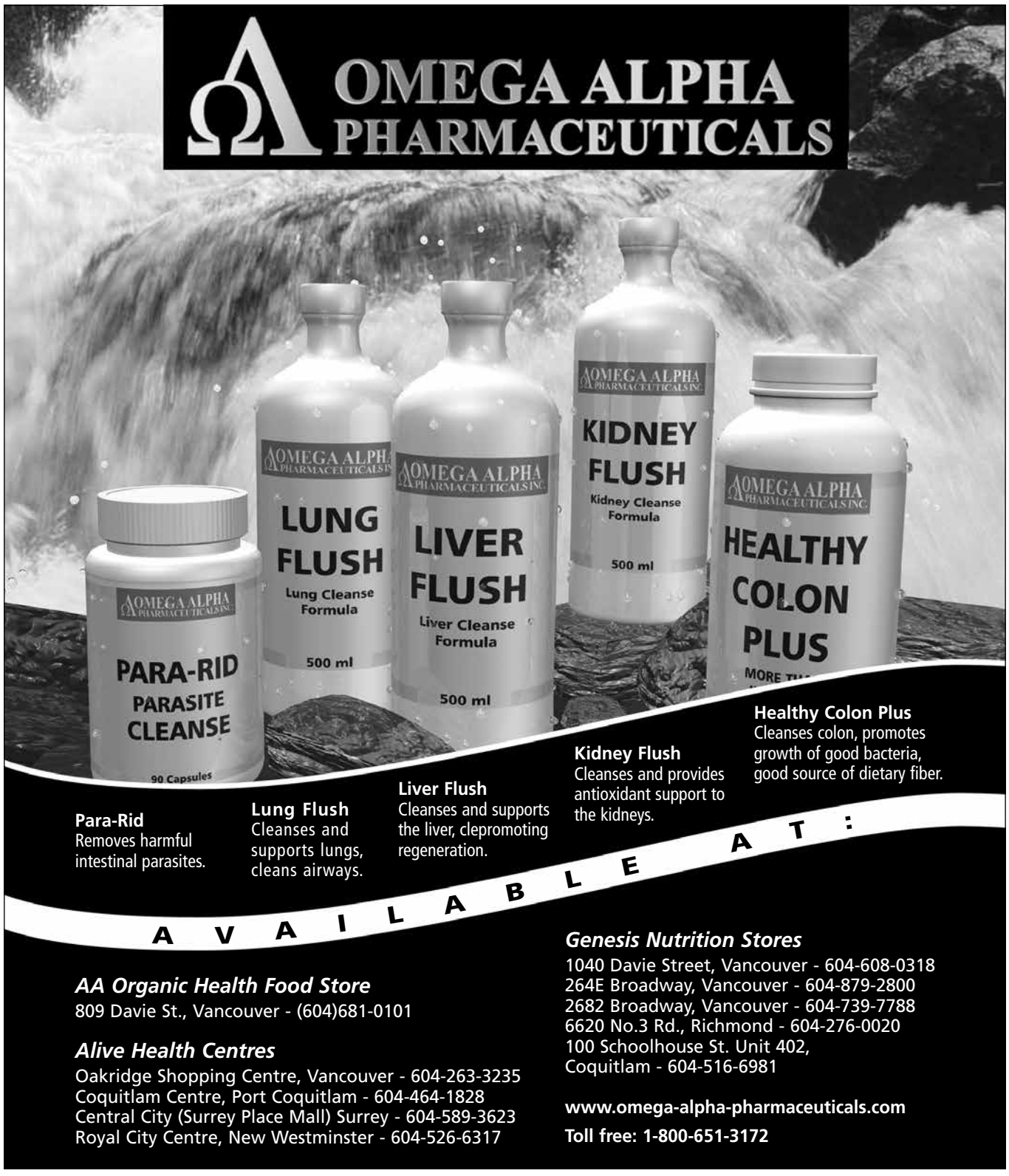
Makes five hearty servings.

Savory chickpea gravy

Chickpea flour has an unpleasant taste when raw; however when cooked it forms a delicious and protein-rich base for gravies. This recipe is suitable for those with wheat and gluten sensitivities.

3 tbsp olive oil

continued on page 30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continued from page 29

1 cup chickpea flour
1 tsp dried sage
1/2 tsp dried thyme
1/2 tsp dried rosemary, crumbled
1/4 tsp pepper
3 1/2 cups hot water
1-2 tbsp umeboshi plum vinegar
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
Salt to taste

In a large saucepan, heat the oil over medium heat. Stir in the chickpea flour, sage, thyme, rosemary and pepper, stirring constantly to form a smooth, thick paste. Cook over medium heat until the flour is lightly toasted, about 5 to 10 minutes or until the flour no longer tastes raw. Remove from heat. Gradually whisk in hot water, mixing carefully to avoid lumps. Add the vinegars and salt to taste. Cook over medium heat, whisking occasionally, until hot and bubbly. Whisk in more water, if needed, to achieve the desired consistency. Makes about 3 cups.

Vesanto Melina is a registered dietitian, internationally known speaker and consultant, based near Fort Langley. She is coauthor of seven books including the new Food Allergy Survival Guide and Becoming Vegetarian; her website is www.nutrispeak.com. For personal consultations call 604-888-8325 or 604-882-6782.

On Track Zodiac

NOVEMBER 2004 by Ilona Hedi Granik

ARIES (March 21 - April 19)
In much the same way that you blow-dry your hair on the opposite side to get the desired look, the same is true with the flow of life. Doing something not viewed as obvious will stand out now as a good choice. Sudden events will bring enlightenment to your day-to-day life.

TAURUS (April 20 - May 21)
You stayed behind the scenes and worked diligently and now it's time to face the dragon. Nothing is ever as difficult as what you imagine. Your patience will be rewarded by the kindheartedness of others. You will surprise yourself and others at the new leadership you display. You are what you love.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 20)
Looks like you are discovering new tools to improve your education. Now you get a chance to swing out of the gate like a champion. You could start to feel more clearheaded as the days of overwhelming confusion seem like ancient history.

CANCER (June 21 - July 22)
Nothing centered, nothing gained. Any ideas that hold promise must be acted upon, as now is a peak time to get work done. Some chapters have ended, and you could get to the files that have collected dust. You feel refreshed and ready to open new doors of perception.

LEO (July 23 - August 22)
You could discover that the stiffness in your body is a mirror of your pattern to hold on too dearly. To stop any bemusement you may have, you could do well to be more silly and child like. You may feel the need to get off that rusty dusty and start releasing the past. Shine on.

VIRGO (August 23 - Sept 22)
No need to seek retribution, as it will fall into your path like a leaf hits the pavement. All the frilly things in life have a stronger sense to them. Your fearless style will suit the demands needed to stay in balance with the here and now.

LIBRA (Sept 23 - Oct 22
Chances are you could be having the time of your life that you only once dreamed of. Those dreams have been fueled by true inspiration and choosing the best mentors. You are meeting with your higher self in a fresh and innovative way.

SCORPIO (Oct 23 -Nov 21)
Machinery and vehicles may be causing you to get stuck in the mud and in the same old groove. As your needs keep changing, so does the refining of your body, spirit and all that you utilize to get your life moving smoothly. Like the winds of change you too will shift gears in no time flat.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 - Dec 21)
Lie low, catch your breath and grab a few winks. A lull is a good time to do just that. Lull yourself back to your senses. There is no concern for outcome as this is a time of whimsy. Your artistic side will take you into some wild adventures when you're ready.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22 - Jan 19)
You are an awesome gem with many talents and you may see how you wasted them on insignificant projects. Take stock of what is real and what appears real, but has a weak foundation. Climbing to unknown regions should be the antidote to any challenges that lie ahead.

AQUARIUS (January 20 - February 19)
You might be trying to mend an unyielding partner. Let your partner be and follow your own bliss. New changes could signify starting over with your love life. You will continue to reinvent the dramas that you star in. Create some bold moves that make you into a success story.

PISCES (Feb 20 - March 20)
If you continue to "play nice" too often, you may end up holding grudges when you could have spoken your peace. Remaining vulnerable is powerful, even though you may feel battered inside. Stay the course and the victory will be all yours from the inside out.

Ilona Hedi Granik is a clairvoyant consultant and author with 31 years of experience in astrology, multi-media art and healing. Ilona23@shaw.ca

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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DATEBOOK

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Compassionate Nonviolent Communication for Personal Growth and Healing. Discover the power of Dr. Marshall Rosenberg's communication process with certified trainers. $185/$165 before Nov 2nd. 1-866-480-7122 www.bcncc.org

NOV 7
Living Aloha: An evening of powerful inspiration steeped in ancient Hawai'ian tradition, uniting life's spiritual/material elements. $15+GST. 7pm Register: LaRaffinage Spirit Spa, (604)681-9933, info@laraffinage.com, www.laraffinage.com. Visit www.lynne-mccarthy.com.

NOV 8 & DEC 6
Scorpio & Sagittarius Astrological Dinners Now at Star Anise Restaurant! Join Host Teresa Waclawik with talk by Astrologer Dawn Muncaster. Dinner, door prizes & entertainment. To reserve: 604-732-5538

NOV 10 & DEC 8
Sacred Journeys with One Voice Harmonic Choir St. George's Chapel, 8:15 pm 2950 Laurel St. By donation. Sacred mantras, throat singing... rsvp: 604-872-7117

NOV 12 - 14
Art For Life Fabulous Fashion & Art Show Friday 7pm Tickets $20. Net proceeds Breast Cancer 1495 West 8th Ave. Vancouver sale continues Sat/Sun 11am - 4pm

Trager ® - Trainings, The Power of Presence- Connect your nervous system to your energy source consciously, with Audrey Mairi, Trager Tutor. Victoria, CMTBC credits. $150-350 Contacts: Victoria, Audrey Mairi 250/595.6418, www.audreymairi.com Vancouver, Louise Morin CTP 604/688.5838

NOV 12, 13, 14
Introduction to Foot Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Course.Intro: $10. Course: $295. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818.

NOV 16
Grassroots Activism for Busy People – Learn how you can be an engaged citizen by spending as little as 20 minutes per month. Presentations on current environmental issues by The David Suzuki Foundation, SPEC, and others. Centre for Peace, 1825 West 16th@7pm; 20/20 Vision: www.2020vision.bc.ca; (604) 929-3067

NOV 18
Ivan Tucakov with Sangha - Ethnic World Fusion Concert. 7-11 pm (doors open 6:30) at St.James Hall 3214 West 10th Ave. $10 ($15 at the door) www.tamburarasa.com

NOV 18 – 21
Core Belief Engineering Basic Course Learn how to transform limiting core beliefs in this mind-expanding four-day entry-level course in White Rock. Information/ registration (604) 536-7402.

NOV 19
Beats on Broadway. Accoustic open stage. 7:30pm 800 E. Broadway

NOV 19 - 21
13th Vancouver International Storytelling Festival Vancouver Museum and Wise Hall Tickets: 604-876-2272 / 604-257-0366 www.vancouverstorytelling.org See page 4.

NOV. 19, 20, 21
Creating Perfect Health Inspirational weekend workshop with Loren Lockman. West End. Info www.rawbc.org or 604.277.1868. Gain vitality, youthfulness, and overall health!

NOV 22
Yanni World Tour 2004. Pacific Coliseum. www.ticketmaster.ca

NOV 26 - 28
Meditation Retreat with Canela Michelle Meyers. Acceptance of 'What Is'. Springbrooke Center - Meals, Accommodation included. $348/$388 Contact: Steve Clippingdale (604) 990-3464 / Zosia Miller zmiller@shaw.ca www.canelemichelle.com

NOV 21
Kits Classics + Worlds Beyond opens its seventh season with a concert of Spanish chamber music. 4:00pm 3214 W. 10th Avenue 604-732-3990 Free.

NOV 24 - 25
Meditation (Satsang) with Neelam who teaches with the blessing of HWL Poonja (Papaji). 7:30 pm. Masonic Hall 1495 W 8th. Retreat on Bowen Island Dec 3-5. Info: 604 254-9150 or now.mail@netrover.com

NOV 26
Vancouver Reiki Master Exchange. Come meet other Reiki Masters, share Reiki, experiences in an informal evening. Canadian Memorial Centre for Peace. Registration 604-876-8816 or www.threshold.ca/reiki

Randah Taher, A 27 years old mother of a Palestinian / Jordanian origin, will be appearing at the Vancouver International Storytelling Festival

NOV 26 - 28
Introduction to Ear Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Course. Intro: $10. Course: $295. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818.

NOV 27
Artful Ageing Workshop with Doris Maranda, MA RCC SEP, Continuum Movement teacher. Restoring resiliency & enhancing creativity. Pacific Mountain Center, 3309 Dunbar. 10am-5pm, followup Dec. 1, 7-9pm Investment $110. 604-254-0147, dmaranda@axion.net.

NOV 28
Psychic Reading Fair, healings also available, 1-5. CDM Psychic Inst. #210 - 1114 W. Broadway,Van 604-730-8788. Mediation and healing classes offered.

DEC 1
Join Barbara Hand Clow and Gerry Clow for a presentation and signing of their latest book, Alchemy Of Nine Dimensions., 6:30 at Banyen Books."

DEC 10 - 12
Introduction to Foot Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Course. Intro: $10. Course: $295. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818.

DEC 10 - 19
Gangteng Tulku Rinpoche 2004 visit to Canada, Victoria. See our ad in this issue. www.yeshekhorlo.ca (250)658-0357, damchos@shaw.ca

DEC 19
Christmas In The Round chanting with Jerry DesVoignes and the MantraVani Orchestra 7:30pm, Trinity St. Marks, $20 Larch / W.2nd Ave 872-7117

DEC 24 - 27
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DEC 29 - JAN 1
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SUNDAYS
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MONDAYS
Satsang Meditation with Canela Michelle Meyers. Toning, Sitting, Silence, Sharing, Questions, Answers... Acceptance of What Is and You Are. Every Monday, 7-9 pm by donation 604.984.0344

Shambhala Buddhism Open House 7pm meditation instruction, sitting meditation practice. 8pm refreshments, Buddhist talk and/or video and discussion. Free. Shambhala Meditation Centre, 3275 Heather at West 17th.

TUESDAYS
A Course in Miracles drop in study group meets 7:30 pm at 517 East 17th Street, North Vancouver. An ongoing ACIM study group that is committed to removing the blocks to the awareness of Love's presence. Call Susan 604 987-6985.

Meditation: Connecting to Your Inner Wisdom, 10:30 - 11:30 am, Centre for Integrated Healing #200 - 1330 West 8th Avenue By donation. www.healing.bc.ca info: 604-734-7125 ext 235

WEDNESDAYS
The Healing Bodywork Centre offers a "Pamper your Partner" evening every last Wednesday of the month. 604.737.8350

Hawaiian Healing Night 7pm. Hawaiian guided Meditation, Sharing the Aloha,and snacks after, meet like minded people and share. $5.00 donation. At Hale Ola - a place of Healing 1215 Madison ave. Burnaby 604-431-7474 Kaimana and Moanikeala

Shambhala Open House 7pm meditation instruction, sitting meditation. 8pm refreshments, talk and discussion. Free. Shambhala Meditation Centre, 3275 Heather at West 17th.

The 9-11 Hoax Film Series
7pm Blacspot Artist's Den presents 4 movies that question the media's portrayal of Sept 11. Wednesday Night 7$ 4118 Hastings (@Gilmore)

SATURDAYS
What is your Super Hero Power? The Art of Intuition Youth 13 -18. Saturdays in November 10:30am. (521 West Georgia St.) By donation. RSVP (604) 682-3269 ext.6245

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continued from page 12

crash - and ironically, it's in their most inert moments with the couch commander they are most receptive to television's marketing machinery.

Ironically, the pattern of increasingly sedentary lifestyles in North America has been accompanied by less sleep. According to stats, North Americans are sleeping one to two hours less per night than the generation living at the turn of the 19th century. In fact, a good night's sleep has become something of an oddity. At the height of the tech boom in the Wall Street Journal, an article entitled Sleep, the New Status Symbol, detailed the newest perk among CEOs like Amazon's Jeff Bezos: eight or more hours sleep. "Once derided as a wimpish failing - the same 1980s overachievers who cried, 'lunch is for losers' - also believed 'sleep is for suckers' - slumber now is being touted as the restorative companion."

That a full night of sleep can be reconfigured as a status-related perk demonstrates just how deep the dislocations have been to the culture over the past two decades. The sum of these changes is undoubtedly contributing to the increasing incidence of clinical depression.

More on the social dimensions of the deadly spin of sloth next month.

Contact writer Geoff Olson at gefo@telus.net

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Vera Drake - heroine or monster?

film review by Robert Alstead

British film director Mike Leigh has a deep fascination with the unsaid. He likes to shed light on those heavy, silent places in people's lives where suffering has been allowed to fester. In illuminating these recesses, he reminds us that lives are lived on many levels, and gives us a sensitive understanding of what it is to be human. It's what makes his films paradoxically utterly depressing and uplifting at the same time.

Leigh did what he does best when he created Vera Drake. He is in similar territory to previous films Secrets and Lies and All or Nothing, focusing on an ordinary working class family pulling together. The setting is 1950s London. The war is still a recent memory. Food rationing continues to be a part of daily life and the upper lip is still stiff. Times are not easy, but there's a jaunty, cockney cheeriness in the cramped Drake household when the family of four return home from work each day.

Vera (Imelda Staunton), the perky, little mum of the title, is constantly on the go. When she's not on her hands and knees scrubbing the homes of the well-to-do, she's going door to door bucking up the poorly, brewing up "cuppas," or putting dinner on the table for her mechanic husband George and grown-up children, Sid and Ethel. As Frank, George's brother and boss, says to him one day "she's got an 'art of gold."

There's nothing to suggest otherwise even when, out of generosity of spirit, we see Vera performing abortions. The staunchly stoical Vera would never use the word abortion: "I help girls out," she says.

Vera's chirpy cheerfulness cannot disguise the seriousness of her vocation. This being the fifties, abortion being illegal and Vera being a simple cleaning lady, her methods are decidedly primitive. It involves pumping soapy water into the womb so that the fetus is flushed out hours later. The process seems like a disaster waiting to happen and, sure enough, when a girl gets an infected womb the cops come knocking.

Leigh is at pains to show that young working class women looking to terminate an unwanted pregnancy had little choice at the time. Both Vera and her girls are victims of society's myopia. The naïve, but well-intentioned Vera is in stark contrast to her friend Lily, who brings new girls to her and secretly charges them a fee for something that Vera would do for free.

Vera Drake is sure to stir debate, but this is more than just an issue film. It's a moving portrait of how a family falls apart and then rallies together after Vera's secret is painfully forced into the open. Vera's sister-in-law, the brazen, upwardly mobile harridan (Heather Craney) wants to immediately cut off all relations. Vera's son (Daniel Mays), a dapper, confident lad, reacts with anger and revulsion.

On the other side, Vera's painfully shy daughter (Alex Kelly), and her romantic interest, the lugubrious neighbour Reg, are quietly supportive. Vera's husband Stan (Phil Davis) is patient, loving and a pillar of strength.

As with other Mike Leigh films, characters are subtly drawn and deeply felt. Even the chief copper (Peter Wright), who arrests Vera, is sympathetic while firm.

The ensemble cast delivers memorable performances. Imelda Staunton, in particular, gives a stunningly, moving performance, as the full weight of the law comes to bear on her in the second part of the film. At the end, what lingers is not so much about the question of the morality of Vera's actions, but an image of a small, good-natured woman crushed by an indifferent system.

Robert Alstead writes for www.iofilm.ca

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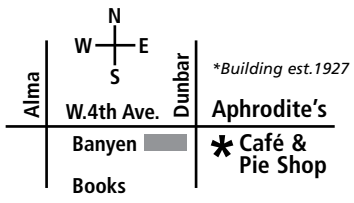

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Next to Banyen Books

continued from page 28

The problem is that sloth, in its original Noonday Demon sense, has become endemic in North America — and while there are those whose depth of depression undoubtedly requires medical intervention, we may be witnessing the pathologizing of a condition that has been with us for hundreds of millennia, inextricably bound to human consciousness. But how we live in the modern age, out of equilibrium with the natural world and our own psyches, may be exacerbating a collective soul-sickness.

In a pill-popping culture where no human frailty, from depression to shyness, goes without its own 'magical bullet', one has to ask: is the marketing tail wagging the cultural dog?

Drug industry ads targeting the public regularly ask a set of questions like, "Have you ever felt sad for a whole day?" and cite positive responses as indicative of the necessity of a course of treatment with a mood-enhancing drug.

Even Sullivan, who is largely sympathetic to the pharmaceutical giants, expresses some doubts on this count. "The news that depression is a chemical or biological problem is a public relations stunt; we could, at least in theory, find the brain chemistry for violence and monkey around with that if we were so inclined. The notion that all depression is invasive illness rests either on a vast expansion of the word illness to include all kinds of qualities (from sleepiness to obnoxious to stupidity) or on a convenient modern fiction."

The record of pharmacological treatment for the clinically depressed has been ambiguous, to say the least. Physician-approved access to a new range of antidepressants has literally saved some people's lives – and apparently has also been responsible for children taking their lives.

In a pill-popping culture where no human frailty, from depression to shyness, goes without its own 'magical bullet', one has to ask: is the marketing tail wagging the cultural dog? How long before most human suffering —from poverty, overwork, the collapse of community, or any number of social scourges —is addressed solely by expensive prescriptions, without addressing possible cultural or psychological foundations that have nothing to do with neurochemistry?

Sloth is being spun into another one of the Deadly Spins, with medicine being swallowed up by marketing.

A few years back, while attending a party for doctors in the Yukon, I saw the lengths to which drug reps will go to cozy up to their targets. It was like watching remoras swim alongside sharks. In the doctor-pharma dynamic, there's no longer a line between the personal and the professional, shmoozing and spin, or science and snakeoil.

In his memoir The Noonday Demon, New Yorker writer Andrew Solomon attends a sales promotion for a new antidepressant, held in a "hulking conference centre," with more than two thousand people in attendance:

"When we all were seated, there rose out of the stage, like the cats in Cats, an entire orchestra, playing "Forget Your Troubles, C'Mon Get Happy" and then Tears for Fears "Everybody Wants to Rule the World." Against this backdrop, a Wizard of Oz voice welcomed us to the launch of a fantastic new product. Gigantic photos of the Grand Canyon and a sylvan stream were projected onto twenty-foot screens, and the lights went up to reveal a set built to resemble a construction site. The orchestra began playing selections from Pink Floyd's The Wall. A wall of gigantic bricks slowly rose at the back of the stage, and on it the names of competitive products appeared. While a chorus of kick dancers wearing mining helmets and carrying pickaxes performed athletic contortions on an electronically controlled scaffold, a rainbow of lasers in the form of the product logo shot from a stagecraft spaceship at the back of the room and knocked out the other antidepressants. The dancers kicked up their workboots and did an incongruous Irish jig as the bricks, apparently made of stage plaster, crashed down in thuds of dust. The head of the sales force stepped over the ruins to crow gleefully as numbers appeared on a screen; he enthused about future profits as though he had just won on Family Feud."

The FDA is the organ grinder, the Canadian Health Protection Branch is its monkey, and the tune being played is "Money."

The author cites himself as a case of someone saved from a ruinous lifelong depression by the new class of antidepressants. But with anecdotes like his, we have every reason to suspect the sales tail is wagging the research dog. The US Food and Drug Administration is less a bulwark these days to the pharmacartels than their proxy. The FDA is the organ grinder, the Canadian Health Protection Branch is its monkey, and the tune being played is "Money." As a result, suspect medicines rocket through our approval system faster than a bad burrito through a fat kid.

Your friendly neighbourhood general practitioner no longer acts as a firewall to the pharmacartels, not when the latter goes straight to the people for mindshare. The principal route is through expensive magazine and television advertisements. We've all seen the television ads of laughing oldsters ambling through bucolic settings, as the hurried voice-over rhymes off the night-of-the-living-dead contraindications. The perfunctory legalese doesn't seem to put a crimp in sales — there's still enough viewers out there who will march off to their doctors demanding the latest fix for the newest pathology. Not incidentally, the massive amount at money thrown into adverstising puts broadcasters and publishers in a less than-curious mindset when it comes to investigating claims of health complications from designer drugs.

Sloth is not new to the human condition, but its profitability surely is. The question is: in a culture that moves at megahertz speeds, how deeply will sloth's many subterranean sources be addressed, while the marketers of mood-enhancing solutions turn a healthy profit? The most depressing prospect would be to discover our highly-medicated Brave New World is the disease for which it pretends to be the cure.

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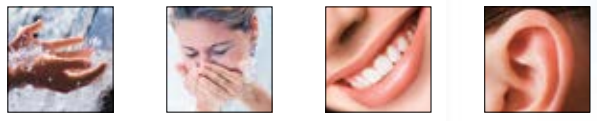

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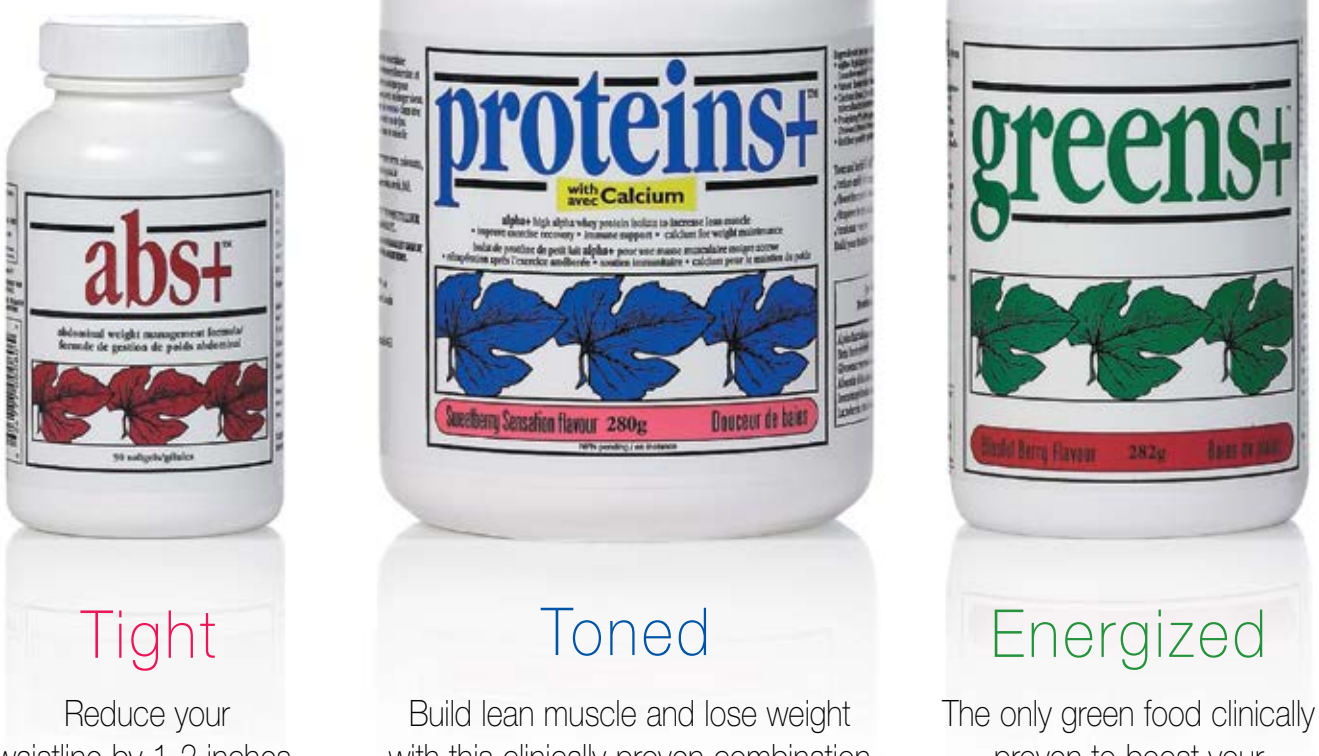

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